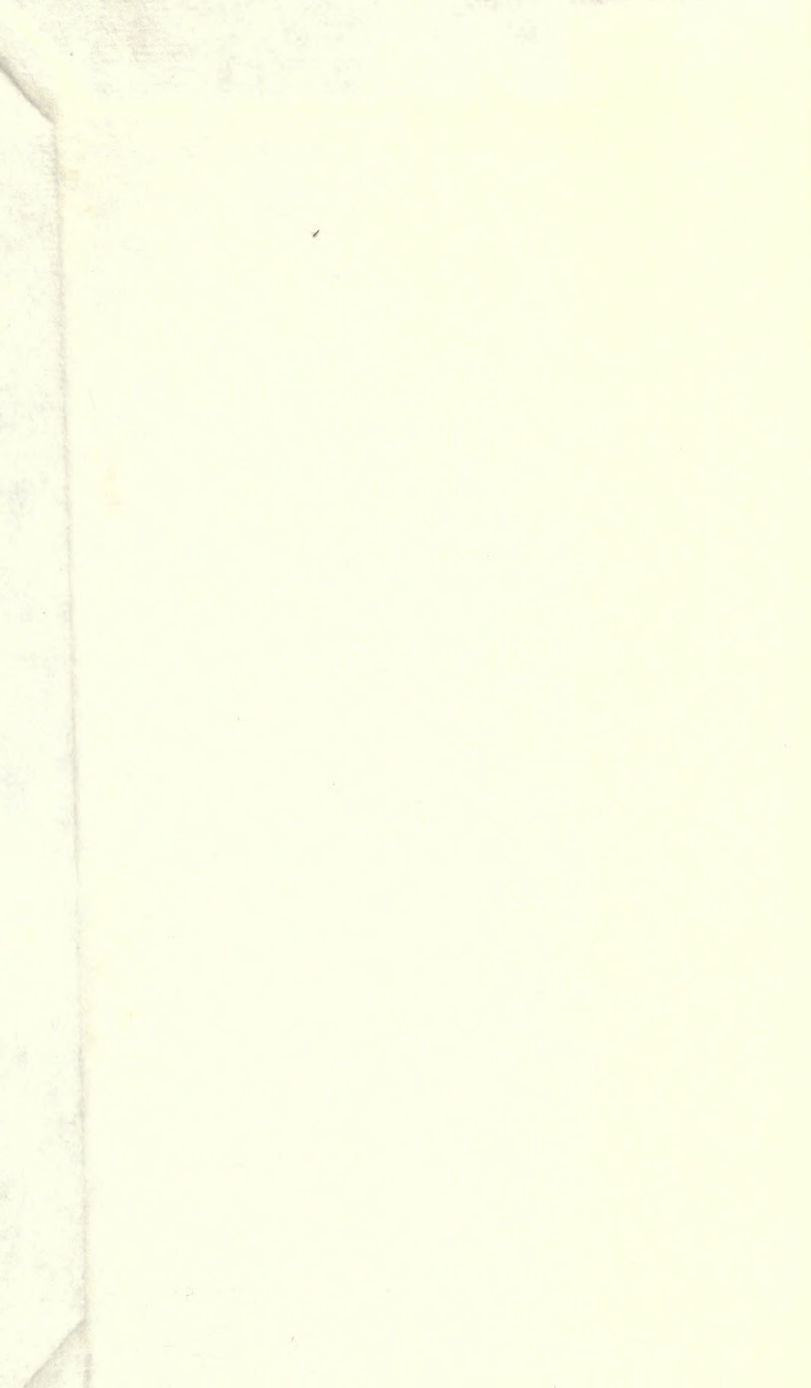


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THE WORKS OF
GEORGE MEREDITH
MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

GEORGE MEREDITH



LONDON

CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD

10 ORANGE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE

1910

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Memoranda

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THE SENTIMENTALISTS

Of this comedy Scenes vi.-viii. in blank verse were written probably forty years ago, or more ; of Scenes i.-v. there are two MS. versions, differing in very slight degree the one from the other, and both written some ten or fifteen years ago. There also exist fragments of further Scenes. Mr. J. M. Barrie has assembled the alternative versions and somewhat rearranged the Scenes—to the text no change nor addition has been made.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HOMEWARE.

PROFESSOR SPIRAL.

ARDEN, ... In love with Astraea.

SWITHIN, }
OSIER, } Sympathetics.

DAME DRESDEN, . . Sister to Homeware.

ASTRAEA, ... Niece to Dame Dresden and Homeware.

LYRA, ... A Wife.

LADY OLDLACE.

VIRGINIA.

WINIFRED.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

AN UNFINISHED COMEDY

The scene is a Surrey garden in early summer. The paths are shaded by tall box-wood hedges. The time is some sixty years ago.

SCENE I

PROFESSOR SPIRAL, DAME DRESDEN, LADY OLDLACE,
VIRGINIA, WINIFRED, SWITHIN, and OSIER

(As they slowly promenade the garden, the professor is delivering one of his exquisite orations on Woman.)

SPIRAL

One husband! •The woman consenting to marriage takes but one. For her there is no widowhood. That punctuation of the sentence called death is not the end of the chapter for her. It is the brilliant proof of her having a soul. So she exalts her sex. Above the wrangle and clamour of the passions she is a fixed star. After once recording her obedience to the laws of our common nature—that is to say, by descending

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

once to wedlock—she passes on in sovereign disengagement—a dedicated widow.

(By this time they have disappearea from view. HOMEWARE appears; he craftily avoids joining their party, like one who is unworthy of such noble oratory. He desires privacy and a book, but is disturbed by the arrival of ARDEN, who is painfully anxious to be polite to 'her uncle Homeware.')

SCENE II

HOMEWARE, ARDEN

ARDEN

A glorious morning, sir.

HOMEWARE

The sun is out, sir.

ARDEN

I am happy in meeting you, Mr. Homeware.

HOMEWARE

I can direct you to the ladies, Mr. Arden. You will find them up yonder avenue.

ARDEN

They are listening, I believe, to an oration from the mouth of Professor Spiral.

HOMEWARE

On an Alpine flower which has descended to flourish on English soil. Professor Spiral calls it Nature's 'dedicated widow.'

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

‘Dedicated widow’?

HOMEWARE

The reference you will observe is to my niece Astraea.

ARDEN

She is dedicated to whom?

HOMEWARE

To her dead husband! You see the reverse of Astraea, says the professor, in those world-infamous widows who marry again.

ARDEN

Bah!

HOMEWARE

Astraea, it is decided, must remain solitary, virgin cold, like the little Alpine flower. Professor Spiral has his theme.

ARDEN

He will make much of it. May I venture to say that I prefer my present company?

HOMEWARE

It is a singular choice. I can supply you with no weapons for the sort of strife in which young men are usually engaged. You belong to the camp you are avoiding.

ARDEN

Achilles was not the worse warrior, sir, for his probation in petticoats.

HOMEWARE

His deeds proclaim it. But Alexander was the better chieftain until he drank with Lais.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

No, I do not plead guilty to Bacchus.

HOMEWARE

You are confessing to the madder form of drunkenness.

ARDEN

How, sir, I beg?

HOMEWARE

How, when a young man sees the index to himself in everything spoken!

ARDEN

That might have the look. I did rightly in coming to you, sir.

HOMEWARE

‘Her uncle Homeware’?

ARDEN

You read through us all, sir.

HOMEWARE

It may interest you to learn that you are the third of the gentlemen commissioned to consult the lady’s uncle Homeware.

ARDEN

The third.

HOMEWARE

Yes, she is pursued. It could hardly be otherwise. Her attractions are acknowledged, and the house is not a convent. Yet, Mr. Arden, I must remind you that all of you are upon an enterprise held to be profane by the laws of this region. Can you again forget that Astraea is a widow?

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

She was a wife two months; she has been a widow two years.

HOMEWARE

The widow of the great and venerable Professor Towers is not to measure her widowhood by years. His, from the altar to the tomb. As it might be read, a one day's walk!

ARDEN

Is she, in the pride of her youth, to be sacrificed to a whimsical feminine delicacy?

HOMEWARE

You have argued it with her?

ARDEN

I have presumed.

HOMEWARE

And still she refused her hand!

ARDEN

She commended me to you, sir. She has a sound judgement of persons.

HOMEWARE

I should put it that she passes the Commissioners of Lunacy, on the ground of her being a humorous damsel. Your predecessors had also argued it with her; and they, too, discovered their enemy in a whimsical feminine delicacy. Where is the difference between you? Evidently she cannot perceive it, and I have to seek. You will have had many conversations with Astraea?

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

I can say, that I am thrice the man I was before I had them.

HOMEWARE

You have gained in manhood from conversations with a widow in her twenty-second year; and you want more of her.

ARDEN

As much as I want more wisdom.

HOMEWARE

You would call her your Muse?

ARDEN

So prosaic a creature as I would not dare to call her that.

HOMEWARE

You have the timely mantle of modesty, Mr. Arden. She has prepared you for some of the tests with her uncle Homeware.

ARDEN

She warned me to be myself, without a spice of affectation.

HOMEWARE

No harder task could be set a young man in modern days. Oh, the humorous damsel. You sketch me the dimple at her mouth.

ARDEN

Frankly, sir, I wish you to know me better; and I think I can bear inspection. Astraea sent me to hear the reasons why she refuses me a hearing.

HOMEWARE

Her reason, I repeat, is this; to her idea, a second

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

wedlock is unholy. Further, it passes me to explain. The young lady lands us where we were at the beginning; such must have been her humorous intention.

ARDEN

What can I do?

HOMEWARE

Love and war have been compared. Both require strategy and tactics, according to my recollection of the campaign.

ARDEN

I will take to heart what you say, sir.

HOMEWARE

Take it to head. There must be occasional descent of lovers' heads from the clouds. And Professor Spiral, —But here we have a belated breeze of skirts.

(The reference is to the arrival of LYRA, breathless.)

SCENE III

HOMEWARE, ARDEN, LYRA

LYRA

My own dear uncle Homeware!

HOMEWARE

But where is Pluriel?

LYRA

Where is a woman's husband when she is away from him?

HOMEWARE

In Purgatory, by the proper reckoning. But hurry

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

up the avenue, or you will be late for Professor Spiral's address.

LYRA

I know it all without hearing. Their Spiral! Ah, Mr. Arden! You have not chosen badly. The greater my experience, the more do I value my uncle Homeware's company.

(She is affectionate to excess but has a roguish eye withal, as of one who knows that uncle Homeware suspects all young men and most young women.)

HOMEWARE

Agree with the lady promptly, my friend.

ARDEN

I would gladly boast of so lengthened an experience, Lady Pluriel.

LYRA

I must have a talk with Astraea, my dear uncle. Her letters breed suspicions. She writes feverishly. The last one hints at service on the West Coast of Africa.

HOMEWARE

For the draining of a pestiferous land, or an enlightenment of the benighted black, we could not despatch a missionary more effective than the handsomest widow in Great Britain.

LYRA

Have you not seen signs of disturbance?

HOMEWARE

A great oration may be a sedative.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

LYRA

I have my suspicions.

HOMEWARE

Mr. Arden, I could counsel you to throw yourself at Lady Pluriel's feet, and institute her as your confessional priest.

ARDEN

Madam, I am at your feet. I am devoted to the lady.

LYRA

Devoted. There cannot be an objection. It signifies that a man asks for nothing in return!

• HOMEWARE

Have a thought upon your words with this lady, Mr. Arden!

ARDEN

Devoted, I said. I am. I would give my life for her.

LYRA

Expecting it to be taken to-morrow or next day? Accept my encomiums. A male devotee is within an inch of a miracle. Women had been looking for this model for ages, uncle.

HOMEWARE

You are the model, Mr Arden!

LYRA

Can you have intended to say that it is in view of marriage you are devoted to the widow of Professor Towers?

ARDEN

My one view.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

LYRA

It is a star you are beseeching to descend.

ARDEN

It is.

LYRA

You disappoint me hugely. You are of the ordinary tribe after all; and your devotion craves an enormous exchange, infinitely surpassing the amount you bestow.

ARDEN

It does. She is rich in gifts; I am poor. But I give all I have.

LYRA

These lovers, uncle Homeware!

HOMEWARE

A honey-bag is hung up and we have them about us. They would persuade us that the chief business of the world is a march to the altar.

ARDEN

With the right partner, if the business of the world is to be better done.

LYRA

Which right partner has been chosen on her part, by a veiled woman, who marches back from the altar to discover that she has chained herself to the skeleton of an idea, or is in charge of that devouring tyrant, an uxorious husband. Is Mr. Arden in favour with the Dame, uncle?

HOMEWARE

My sister is an unsuspecting potentate, as you know. Pretenders to the hand of an inviolate widow bite like waves at a rock.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

LYRA

Professor Spiral advances rapidly.

HOMEWARE

Not, it would appear, when he has his audience of ladies and their satellites.

LYRA

I am sure I hear a spring-tide of enthusiasm coming.

ARDEN

I will see.

(He goes up the path.)

LYRA

Now! my own dear uncle, save me from Pluriel. I have given him the slip in sheer desperation; but the man is at his shrewdest when he is left to guess at my heels. Tell him I am anywhere but here. Tell him I ran away to get a sense of freshness in seeing him again. Let me have one day of liberty, or, upon my word, I shall do deeds; I shall console young Arden: I shall fly to Paris and set my cap at presidents and foreign princes. Anything rather than be eaten up every minute, as I am. May no woman of my acquaintance marry a man of twenty years her senior! She marries a gigantic limpet. At that period of his life a man becomes too voraciously constant.

HOMEWARE

Cupid clipped of wing is a destructive parasite.

LYRA

I am in dead earnest, uncle, and I will have a respite, or else let decorum beware!

(Arden returns.)

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

The ladies are on their way.

LYRA

I must get Astraea to myself.

HOMEWARE

My library is a virgin fortress, Mr. Arden. Its gates are open to you on other topics than the coupling of inebriates.

*(He enters the house—LYRA disappears in the garden—
Spiral's audience reappear without him.)*

SCENE IV

DAME DRESDEN, LADY OLDLACE, VIRGINIA, WINIFRED,
ARDEN, SWITHIN, OSIER

LADY OLDLACE

Such perfect rhythm!

WINIFRED

Such oratory!

LADY OLDLACE

A master hand. I was in a trance from the first sentence to the impressive close.

OSIER

Such oratory is a whole orchestral symphony.

VIRGINIA

Such command of intonation and subject!

SWITHIN

That resonant voice!

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

LADY OLDLACE

Swithin, his flow of eloquence! He launched forth!

SWITHIN

Like an eagle from a cliff.

OSIER

The measure of the words was like a beat of wings.

SWITHIN

He makes poets of us.

DAME DRESDEN

Spiral achieved his pinnacle to-day!

VIRGINIA

How treacherous is our memory when we have most the longing to recall great sayings!

OSIER

True, I conceive that my notes will be precious.

WINIFRED

You could take notes!

LADY OLDLACE

It seems a device for missing the quintessential.

SWITHIN

Scraps of the body to the loss of the soul of it. We can allow that our friend performed good menial service.

WINIFRED

I could not have done the thing.

SWITHIN

In truth, it does remind one of the mess of pottage.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

LADY OLDLACE

One hardly felt one breathed.

VIRGINIA

I confess it moved me to tears.

SWITHIN

There is a pathos for us in the display of perfection. Such subtle contrast with our individual poverty affects us.

WINIFRED

Surely there were passages of a distinct and most exquisite pathos.

LADY OLDLACE

As in all great oratory! The key of it is the pathos.

VIRGINIA

In great oratory, great poetry, great fiction; you try it by the pathos. All our critics agree in stipulating for the pathos. My tears were no feminine weakness, I could not be a discordant instrument.

SWITHIN

I must make confession. He played on me too.

OSIER

We shall be sensible for long of that vibration from the touch of a master hand.

ARDEN

An accomplished player can make a toy-shop fiddle sound you a Stradivarius.

DAME DRESDEN

Have you a right to a remark, Mr. Arden? What could have detained you?

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

Ah, Dame. It may have been a warning that I am a discordant instrument. I do not readily vibrate.

DAME DRESDEN

A discordant instrument is out of place in any civil society. You have lost what cannot be recovered.

ARDEN

There are the notes.

OSIER

Yes, the notes.

SWITHIN

You can be satisfied with the dog's feast at the table, Mr. Arden!

OSIER

Ha!

VIRGINIA

Never have I seen Astraea look sublimer in her beauty than with her eyes uplifted to the impassioned speaker, reflecting every variation of his tones.

ARDEN

Astraea!

LADY OLDLACE

She was entranced when he spoke of woman descending from her ideal to the gross reality of man.

OSIER

Yes, yes. I have the words [*reads*]: 'Woman is to the front of man, holding the vestal flower of a purer civilization. I see,' he says, 'the little taper in her

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

hands transparent round the light, against rough winds.'

DAME DRESDEN

And of Astraea herself, what were the the words?
'Nature's dedicated widow.'

SWITHIN

Vestal widow, was it not?

VIRGINIA

Maiden widow, I think.

DAME DRESDEN

We decide for 'dedicated.'

WINIFRED

Spiral paid his most happy tribute to the memory of her late husband, the renowned Professor Towers.

VIRGINIA

But his look was at dear Astraea.

ARDEN

At Astraea? Why?

VIRGINIA

For her sanction doubtless.

ARDEN

Ha!

WINIFRED

He said his pride would ever be in his being received as the successor of Professor Towers.

ARDEN

Successor!

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

SWITHIN

Guardian was it not?

OSIER

Tutor. I think he said.

(The three gentlemen consult Osier's notes uneasily.)

DAME DRESDEN

Our professor must by this time have received in full Astraea's congratulations, and Lyra is hearing from her what it is to be too late. You will join us at the luncheon table, if you do not feel yourself a discordant instrument there, Mr. Arden?

ARDEN *(going to her)*

The allusion to knife and fork tunes my strings instantly, Dame.

DAME DRESDEN

You must help me to-day, for the professor will be tired, though we dare not hint at it in his presence. No reference, ladies, to the great speech we have been privileged to hear; we have expressed our appreciation and he could hardly bear it.

ARDEN

Nothing is more distasteful to the orator!

VIRGINIA

As with every true genius, he is driven to feel humbly human by the exultation of him.

SWITHIN

He breathes in a rarified air.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

OSIER

I was thrilled, I caught at passing beauties. I see that here and there I have jotted down incoherencies, lines have seduced me, so that I missed the sequence—the precious part. Ladies, permit me to rank him with Plato as to the equality of women and men.

WINIFRED

It is nobly said.

OSIER

And with the Stoics, in regard to celibacy.

(By this time all the ladies have gone into the house.)

ARDEN

Successor! Was the word successor?

(ARDEN, SWITHIN, and OSIER are excitedly searching the notes when SPIRAL passes and strolls into the house. His air of self-satisfaction increases their uneasiness. They follow him. ASTRAEA and LYRA come down the path.)

SCENE V

ASTRAEA, LYRA

LYRA

Oh! Pluriel, ask me of him! I wish I were less sure he would not be at the next corner I turn.

ASTRAEA

You speak of your husband strangely, Lyra.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

LYRA

My head is out of a sack. I managed my escape from him this morning by renouncing bath and breakfast; and what a relief, to be in the railway carriage alone! that is, when the engine snorted. And if I set eyes on him within a week, he will hear some truths. His idea of marriage is, the taking of the woman into custody. My hat is on, and on goes Pluriel's. My foot on the stairs; I hear his boot behind me. In my boudoir I am alone one minute, and then the door opens to the inevitable. I pay a visit, he is passing the house as I leave it. He will not even affect surprise. I belong to him, I am cat's mouse. And he will look doating on me in public. And when I speak to anybody, he is that fearful picture of all smirks. Fling off a kid glove after a round of calls; feel your hand—there you have me now that I am out of him for my half a day, if for as long.

ASTRAEA

This is one of the world's happy marriages!

LYRA

This is one of the world's choice dishes! And I have it planted under my nostrils eternally. Spare me the mention of Pluriel until he appears; that's too certain this very day. Oh! good husband! good kind of man! whatever you please; only some peace, I do pray, for the husband-haunted wife. I like him, I like him, of course, but I want to breathe. Why, an English boy perpetually bowled by a Christmas pudding would come to loathe the mess.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

His is surely the excess of a merit.

LYRA

Excess is a poison. Excess of a merit is a capital offence in morality. It disgusts us with virtue. And you are the cunningest of fencers, tongue, or foils. You lead me to talk of myself, and I hate the subject. By the way, you have practised with Mr. Arden.

ASTRAEA

A tiresome instructor, who lets you pass his guard to compliment you on a hit.

LYRA

He rather wins me.

ASTRAEA

He does at first.

LYRA

Begins Plurielizing, without the law to back him, does he?

ASTRAEA

The fencing lessons are at an end.

LYRA

The duetts with Mr. Swithin's violoncello continue?

ASTRAEA

He broke through the melody.

LYRA

There were readings in poetry with Mr. Osier, I recollect.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

His own compositions became obtrusive.

LYRA

No fencing, no music, no poetry! no West Coast of Africa either, I suppose.

ASTRAEA

Very well! I am on my defence. You at least shall not misunderstand me, Lyra. One intense regret I have; that I did not live in the time of the Amazons. They were free from this question of marriage; this babble of love. Why am I so persecuted? He will not take a refusal. There are sacred reasons. I am supported by every woman having the sense of her dignity. I am perverted, burlesqued by the fury of wrath I feel at their incessant pursuit. And I despise Mr. Osier and Mr. Swithin because they have an air of pious agreement with the Dame, and are conspirators behind their mask.

LYRA

False, false men!

ASTRAEA

They come to me. I am complimented on being the vulnerable spot.

LYRA

The object desired is usually addressed by suitors, my poor Astraea!

ASTRAEA

With the assumption, that as I am feminine I must necessarily be in the folds of the horrible constrictor

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

they call Love, and that I leap to the thoughts of their debasing marriage.

LYRA

One of them goes to Mr. Homeware.

ASTRAEA

All are sent to him in turn. He can dispose of them.

LYRA

Now that is really masterly fun, my dear; most creditable to you! Love, marriage, a troop of suitors, and uncle Homeware. No, it would not have occurred to me, and I am considered to have some humour. Of course, he disposes of them. He seemed to have a fairly favourable opinion of Mr. Arden.

ASTRAEA

I do not share it. He is the least respectful of the sentiments entertained by me. Pray, spare me the mention of him, as you say of your husband. He has that pitiful conceit in men, which sets them thinking that a woman must needs be susceptible to the declaration of the mere existence of their passion. He is past argument. Impossible for him to conceive a woman's having a mind above the conditions of her sex. A woman, according to him, can have no ideal of life, except as a ball to toss in the air and catch in a cup. Put him aside. . . . We creatures are doomed to marriage, and if we shun it, we are a kind of cripple. He is grossly earthy in his view of us. We are unable to move a step in thought or act unless we submit to have a husband. That is his reasoning. Nature! Nature! I have to hear of Nature! We must be above

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

Nature, I tell him, or we shall be very much below. He is ranked among our clever young men; and he can be amusing. So far he passes muster; and he has a pleasant voice. I dare say he is an uncle Homeware's good sort of boy. Girls like him. Why does he not fix his attention upon one of them? Why upon me? We waste our time in talking of him. . . . The secret of it is, that he has no reverence. The marriage he vaunts is a mere convenient arrangement for two to live together under command of nature. Reverence for the state of marriage is unknown to him. How explain my feeling? I am driven into silence. Cease to speak of him. . . . He is the dupe of his eloquence—his passion, he calls it. I have only to trust myself to him, and—I shall be one of the world's married women! Words are useless. How am I to make him see that it is I who respect the state of marriage by refusing; not he by perpetually soliciting. Once married, married for ever. Widow is but a term. When women hold their own against him, as I have done, they will be more esteemed. I have resisted and conquered. I am sorry I do not share in the opinion of your favourite.

LYRA

Mine?

ASTRAEA

You spoke warmly of him.

LYRA

Warmly, was it?

ASTRAEA

You are not blamed, my dear: he has a winning manner.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

LYRA

I take him to be a manly young fellow, smart enough; handsome too.

ASTRAEA

Oh, he has good looks.

LYRA

And a head, by repute.

ASTRAEA

For the world's work, yes.

LYRA

Not romantic.

ASTRAEA

Romantic ideas are for dreamy simperers.

LYRA

Amazons repudiate them.

ASTRAEA

Laugh at me. Half my time I am laughing at myself. I should regain my pride if I could be resolved on a step. I am strong to resist; I have not strength to move.

LYRA

I see the sphinx of Egypt!

ASTRAEA

And all the while I am a manufactory of gunpowder in this quiet old-world Sabbath circle of dear good souls, with their stereotyped interjections, and orchestra of enthusiasms; their tapering delicacies:

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

the rejoicing they have in their common agreement on all created things. To them it is restful. It spurs me to fly from rooms and chairs and beds and houses. I sleep hardly a couple of hours. Then into the early morning air, out with the birds; I know no other pleasure.

LYRA

Hospital work for a variation: civil or military. The former involves the house-surgeon: the latter the grateful lieutenant.

ASTRAEA

Not if a woman can resist . . . I go to it proof-armoured.

LYRA

What does the Dame say?

ASTRAEA

Sighs over me! Just a little maddening to hear.

LYRA

When we feel we have the strength of giants, and are bidden to sit and smile! You should rap out some of our old sweet-innocent garden oaths with her—'Carnation! Dame!' That used to make her dance on her seat.—'But, dearest Dame, it is as natural an impulse for women to have that relief as for men; and natural will out, begonia! it will!' We ran through the book of Botany for devilish objurgations. I do believe our misconduct caused us to be handed to the good man at the altar as the right corrective. And you were the worst offender.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

Was I? I could be now, though I am so changed a creature.

LYRA

You enjoy the studies with your Spiral, come!

ASTRAEA

Professor Spiral is the one honest gentleman here. He does homage to my principles. I have never been troubled by him: no silly hints or side-looks—you know, the dog at the forbidden bone.

LYRA

A grand orator.

ASTRAEA

He is. You fix on the smallest of his gifts. He is intellectually and morally superior.

LYRA

Praise of that kind makes me rather incline to prefer his inferiors. He fed gobble-gobble on your puffs of incense. I coughed and scraped the gravel; quite in vain; he tapped for more and more.

ASTRAEA

Professor Spiral is a thinker; he is a sage. He gives women their due.

LYRA

And he is a bachelor too—or consequently.

ASTRAEA

If you like you may be as playful with me as the Lyra of our maiden days used to be. My dear, my

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

dear, how glad I am to have you here! You remind me that I once had a heart. It will beat again with you beside me, and I shall look to you for protection. A novel request from me. From annoyance, I mean. It has entirely altered my character. Sometimes I am afraid to think of what I was, lest I should suddenly romp, and perform pirouettes and cry 'Carnation!' There is the bell. We must not be late when the professor condescends to sit for meals.

LYRA

• That rings healthily in the professor.

ASTRAEA

Arm in arm, my Lyra.

LYRA

No Pluriel yet!

(They enter the house, and the time changes to evening of the same day. The scene is still the garden.)

SCENE VI

ASTRAEA, ARDEN

ASTRAEA

Pardon me if I do not hear you well.

ARDEN

I will not even think you barbarous.

ASTRAEA

I am. I am the object of the chase.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

The huntsman draws the wood, then, and not you.

ASTRAEA

At any instant I am forced to run,
Or turn in my defence: how can I be
Other than barbarous? You are the cause.

ARDEN

No: heaven that made you beautiful's the cause.

ASTRAEA

Say, earth, that gave you instincts. Bring me down
To instincts! When by chance I speak awhile
With our professor, you appear in haste,
Full cry to sight again the missing hare.
Away ideas! All that's divinest flies!
I have to bear in mind how young you are.

ARDEN

You have only to look up to me four years,
Instead of forty!

ASTRAEA

Sir?

ARDEN

There's my misfortune!
And worse that, young, I love as a young man.
Could I but quench the fire, I might conceal
The youthfulness offending you so much.

ASTRAEA

I wish you would. I wish it earnestly.

ARDEN

Impossible. I burn.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

You should not burn.

ARDEN

'Tis more than I. 'Tis fire. It masters will.
You would not say 'should not' if you knew fire.
It seizes. It devours.

ASTRAEA

Dry wood.

ARDEN

Cold wit!

How cold you can be! But be cold, for sweet
You must be. And your eyes are mine: with them
I see myself: unworthy to usurp
The place I hold a moment. While I look
I have my happiness.

ASTRAEA

You should look higher.

ARDEN

Through you to the highest. Only through you!
Through you
The mark I may attain is visible,
And I have strength to dream of winning it.
You are the bow that speeds the arrow: you
The glass that brings the distance nigh. My world
Is luminous through you, pure heavenly,
But hangs upon the rose's outer leaf,
Not next her heart. Astraea! my own beloved!

ASTRAEA

We may be excellent friends. And I have faults.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

Name them : I am hungering for more to love.

ASTRAEA

I waver very constantly : I have
No fixity of feeling or of sight.
I have no courage : I can often dream
Of daring : when I wake I am in dread.
I am inconstant as a butterfly,
And shallow as a brook with little fish !
Strange little fish, that tempt the small boy's net,
But at a touch straight dive ! I am any one's,
And no one's ! I am vain.
Praise of my beauty lodges in my ears.
The lark reels up with it ; the nightingale
Sobs bleeding ; the flowers nod ; I could believe
A poet, though he praised me to my face.

ARDEN

Never had poet so divine a fount
To drink of !

ASTRAEA

Have I given you more to love !

ARDEN

More ! You have given me your inner mind,
Where conscience in the robes of Justice shoots
Light so serenely keen that in such light
Fair infants, ' newly criminal of earth,'
As your friend Osier says, might show some blot.
Seraphs might ! More to love ? Oh ! these dear faults
Lead you to me like troops of laughing girls
With garlands. All the fear is, that you trifle,
Feigning them.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

For what purpose?

ARDEN

Can I guess?

ASTRAEA

I think 'tis you who have the trifler's note.
My hearing is acute, and when you speak,
Two voices ring, though you speak fervidly.
Your Osier quotation jars. Beware!
Why were you absent from our meeting-place
This morning?

ARDEN

I was on the way, and met
Your uncle Homeware.

ASTRAEA

Ah!

ARDEN

He loves you.

ASTRAEA

He loves me: he has never understood.
He loves me as a creature of the flock;
A little whiter than some others. Yes;
He loves me, as men love; not to uplift;
Not to have faith in; not to spiritualize.
For him I am a woman and a widow:
One of the flock, unmarked save by a brand.
He said it!—You confess it! You have learnt
To share his error, erring fatally.

ARDEN

By whose advice went I to him?

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

By whose?

Pursuit that seemed incessant: persecution.

Besides, I have changed since then: I change; I change;

It is too true I change. I could esteem
You better did you change. And had you heard
The noble words this morning from the mouth
Of our professor, changed were you, or raised
Above love-thoughts, love-talk, and flame and flutter,
High as eternal snows. What said he else,
My uncle Homeware?

ARDEN

That you were not free:

And that he counselled us to use our wits.

ASTRAEA

But I am free! free to be ever free!
My freedom keeps me free! He counselled us?
I am not one in a conspiracy.
I scheme no discord with my present life.
Who does, I cannot look on as my friend.
Not free? You know me little. Were I chained,
For liberty I would sell liberty
To him who helped me to an hour's release.
But having perfect freedom . . .

ARDEN

No.

ASTRAEA

Good sir,

You check me?

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

Perfect freedom?

ASTRAEA

Perfect!

ARDEN

No!

ASTRAEA

Am I awake? What blinds me?

ARDEN

Filaments

The slenderest ever woven about a brain
From the brain's mists, by the little sprite called
Fancy.

A breath would scatter them; but that one breath
Must come of animation. When the heart
Is as a frozen sea the brain spins webs.

ASTRAEA

'Tis very singular! I understand.
You translate cleverly. I hear in verse
My uncle Homeware's prose. He has these notions.
Old men presume to read us.

ARDEN

Young men may.

You gaze on an ideal reflecting you:
Need I say beautiful? Yet it reflects
Less beauty than the lady whom I love
Breathes, radiates. Look on yourself in me.
What harm in gazing? You are this flower:
You are that spirit. But the spirit fed
With substance of the flower takes all its bloom!
And where in spirits is the bloom of the flower?

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

'Tis very singular. You have a tone
Quite changed.

ARDEN

You wished a change. To show you, how
I read you . . .

ASTRAEA

Oh! no, no. It means dissection.
I never heard of reading character
That did not mean dissection. Spare me that.
I am wilful, violent, capricious, weak,
Wound in a web of my own spinning-wheel,
A star-gazer, a riband in the wind . . .

ARDEN

A banner in the wind! and me you lead,
And shall! At least, I follow till I win.

ASTRAEA

Forbear, I do beseech you.

ARDEN

I have had
Your hand in mine.

ASTRAEA

Once.

ARDEN

Once!

Once! 'twas; once, was the heart alive,
Leaping to break the ice. Oh! once, was aye
That laughed at frosty May like spring's return.
Say you are terrorized: you dare not melt.
You like me; you might love me; but to dare,

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

Tasks more than courage. Veneration, friends,
Self-worship, which is often self-distrust,
Bar the good way to you, and make a dream
A fortress and a prison.

ASTRAEA

Changed! you have changed
Indeed. When you so boldly seized my hand
It seemed a boyish freak, done boyishly.
I wondered at Professor Spiral's choice
Of you for an example, and our hope.
Now you grow dangerous. You must have thought,
And some things true you speak—save 'terrorized.'
It may be flattering to sweet self-love
To deem me terrorized. 'Tis my own soul,
My heart, my mind, all that I hold most sacred,
Not fear of others, bids me walk aloof.
Who terrorizes me? Who could? Friends? Never!
The world? as little. Terrorized!

ARDEN

Forgive me.

ASTRAEA

I might reply, Respect me. If I loved,
If I could be so faithless as to love,
Think you I would not rather noise abroad
My shame for penitence than let friends dwell
Deluded by an image of one vowed
To superhuman, who the common mock
Of things too human has at heart become.

ARDEN

You would declare your love?

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

I said, my shame.

*The woman that's the widow is ensnared,
Caught in the toils! away with widows!—Oh!
I hear men shouting it.*

ARDEN

'But shame there's none
For *me* in loving: therefore I may take
Your friends to witness? tell them that *my* pride
Is in the love of *you*?

ASTRAEA

'Twill soon bring
The silence that should be between us two,
And sooner give me peace.

ARDEN

And you consent?

ASTRAEA

For the sake of peace and silence I consent,
You should be warned that you will cruelly
Disturb them. But 'tis best. You should be warned
Your pleading will be hopeless. But 'tis best.
You have my full consent. Weigh well your acts,
You cannot rest where you have cast this bolt:
Lay that to heart, and you are cherished, prized,
Among them: they are estimable ladies,
Warmest of friends; though you may think they soar
Too loftily for your measure of strict sense
(And as my uncle Homeware's pupil, sir,
In worldliness, you do), just minds they have:
Once know them, and your banishment will fret.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

I would not run such risks. You will offend,
Go near to outrage them; and perturbate
As they have not deserved of you. But I,
Considering I am nothing in the scales
You balance, quite and of necessity
Consent. When you have weighed it, let me hear.
My uncle Homeware steps this way in haste.
We have been talking long, and in full view!

SCENE VII

ASTRAEA, ARDEN, HOMEWARE

HOMEWARE

Astraea, child! You, Arden, stand aside.
Ay, if she were a maid you might speak first,
But being a widow she must find her tongue.
Astraea, they await you. State the fact
As soon as you are questioned, fearlessly.
Open the battle with artillery.

ASTRAEA

What is the matter, uncle Homeware?

HOMEWARE (*playing fox*)

What?

Why, we have watched your nice preliminaries
From the windows half the evening. Now run in.
Their patience has run out, and, as I said,
Unlimber and deliver fire at once.
Your aunts Virginia and Winifred,
With Lady Oldlace, are the senators,

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

The Dame for Dogs. They wear terrific brows,
But be not you affrighted, my sweet chick,
And tell them uncle Homeware backs your choice,
By lawyer and by priests! by altar, fount,
And testament!

ASTRAEA

My choice! what have I chosen?

HOMEWARE

She asks? You hear her, Arden?—what and whom!

ARDEN

Surely, sir! . . . heavens! have you . . .

HOMEWARE

Surely the old fox,

In all I have read, is wiser than the young:
And if there is a game for fox to play,
Old fox plays cunningest.

ASTRAEA

Why fox? Oh! uncle,
You make my heart beat with your mystery;
I never did love riddles. Why sit they
Awaiting me, and looking terrible?

HOMEWARE

It is reported of an ancient folk
Which worshipped idols, that upon a day
Their idol pitched before them on the floor . . .

ASTRAEA

Was ever so ridiculous a tale!

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

HOMEWARE

To call the attendant fires to account
Their elders forthwith sat . . .

ASTRAEA

Is there no prayer
Will move you, uncle Homeware?

HOMEWARE

God-daughter,
This gentleman for you I have proposed
As husband.

ASTRAEA

Arden! we are lost.

ARDEN

Astraea!
Support him! Though I knew not his design,
It plants me in mid-heaven. Would it were
Not you, but I to bear the shock. My love!
We lost, you cry; you join me with you lost!
The truth leaps from your heart: and let it shine
To light us on our brilliant battle day
And victory!

ASTRAEA

Who betrayed me!

HOMEWARE

Who betrayed?
Your voice, your eyes, your veil, your knife and fork;
Your tenfold worship of your widowhood;
As he who sees he must yield up the flag,
Hugs it oath-swearingly! straw-drowningly.
To be reasonable: you sent this gentleman
Referring him to me. . . .

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ASTRAEA

And that is false.

All's false. You have conspired. I am disgraced.
But you will learn you have judged erroneously.
I am not the frail creature you conceive.
Between your vision of life's aim, and theirs
Who presently will question me, I cling
To theirs as light: and yours I deem a den
Where souls can have no growth.

HOMEWARE

But when we touched
The point of hand-pressings, 'twas rightly time
To think of wedding ties?

ASTRAEA

Arden, adieu!

(She rushes into house.)

SCENE VIII

ARDEN, HOMEWARE

ARDEN

Adieu! she said. With her that word is final.

HOMEWARE

Strange! how young people blowing words like clouds
On winds, now fair, now foul, and as they please
Should still attach the Fates to them.

ARDEN

She's wounded:

Wounded to the quick!

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

HOMEWARE

The quicker our success: for short
Of that, these dames, who feel for everything,
Feel nothing.

ARDEN

Your intention has been kind,
Dear sir, but you have ruined me.

HOMEWARE

Good-night. (*Going.*)

ARDEN

Yet she said, *we are lost*, in her surprise.

HOMEWARE

Good morning. (*Returning.*)

ARDEN

I suppose that I am bound
(If I could see for what I should be glad!)
To thank you, sir.

HOMEWARE

Look hard but give no thanks.
I found my girl descending on the road
Of breakneck coquetry, and barred her way.
Either she leaps the bar, or she must back.
That means she marries you, or says good-bye.
(*Going again.*)

ARDEN

Now she's among them. (*Looking at window.*)

HOMEWARE

Now she sees her mind.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

ARDEN

It is my destiny she now decides!

HOMEWARE

There's now suspense on earth and round the spheres.

ARDEN

She's mine now: mine! or I am doomed to go.

HOMEWARE

The marriage ring, or the portmanteau now!

ARDEN

Laugh as you like, sir! I am not ashamed
To love and own it.

HOMEWARE

So the symptoms show.
Rightly, young man, and proving a good breed.
To further it's a duty to mankind
And I have lent my push. But recollect:
Old Ilion was not conquered in a day.

(He enters house.)

ARDEN

Ten years! If I may win her at the end!

CURTAIN

**THE GENTLEMAN OF FIFTY AND
THE DAMSEL OF NINETEEN**



THE GENTLEMAN OF FIFTY AND THE DAMSEL OF NINETEEN¹

CHAPTER I

He

Passing over Ickleworth Bridge and rounding up the heavily-shadowed river of our narrow valley, I perceived a commotion as of bathers in a certain bright space immediately underneath the vicar's terrace-garden steps. My astonishment was considerable when it became evident to me that the vicar himself was disporting in the water, which, reaching no higher than his waist, disclosed him in the ordinary habiliments of his cloth. I knew my friend to be one of the most absent-minded of men, and my first effort to explain the phenomenon of his appearance there, suggested that he might have walked in, the victim of a fit of abstraction, and that he had not yet fully comprehended his plight; but this idea was dispersed when I beheld the very portly lady, his partner in joy and adversity, standing immersed, and perfectly attired, some short distance nearer to the bank. As I advanced along the bank opposed to them, I was further amazed to hear them discoursing quite equably together, so that it was impossible to say on the face of it whether a

¹ An early uncompleted and hitherto unpublished fragment.

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catastrophe had occurred, or the great heat of a cloudless summer day had tempted an eccentric couple to seek for coolness in the directest fashion, without absolute disregard to propriety. I made a point of listening for the accentuation of the 'my dear' which was being interchanged, but the key-note to the harmony existing between husband and wife was neither excessively unctuous, nor shrewd, and the connubial shuttlecock was so well kept up on both sides that I chose to await the issue rather than speculate on the origin of this strange exhibition. I therefore, as I could not be accused of an outrage to modesty, permitted myself to maintain what might be invidiously termed a satyr-like watch from behind a forward flinging willow, whose business in life was to look at its image in a brown depth, branches, trunk, and roots. The sole indication of discomfort displayed by the pair was that the lady's hand worked somewhat fretfully to keep her dress from ballooning and puffing out of all proportion round about her person, while the vicar, who stood without his hat, employed a spongy handkerchief from time to time in tempering the ardours of a vertical sun. If you will consent to imagine a bald blackbird, his neck being shrunk in apprehensively, as you may see him in the first rolling of the thunder, you will gather an image of my friend's appearance.

He performed his capital ablutions with many loud 'poofs,' and a casting up of dazzled eyes, an action that gave point to his recital of the invocation of Chryses to Smintheus which brought upon the Greeks disaster and much woe. Between the lines he replied to his wife, whose remarks increased in quantity, and

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also, as I thought, in emphasis, under the river of verse which he poured forth unbaffled, broadening his chest to the sonorous Greek music in a singular rapture of obliviousness.

A wise man will not squander his laughter if he can help it, but will keep the agitation of it down as long as he may. The simmering of humour sends a lively spirit into the mind, whereas the boiling over is but a prodigal expenditure and the disturbance of a clear current: for the comic element is visible to you in all things, if you do but keep your mind charged with the perception of it, as I have heard a great expounder deliver himself on another subject; and he spoke very truly. So, I continued to look on with the gravity of Nature herself, and I could not but fancy, and with less than our usual wilfulness when we fancy things about Nature's moods, that the Mother of men beheld this scene with half a smile, differently from the simple observation of those cows whisking the flies from their flanks at the edge of the shorn meadow and its aspens, seen beneath the curved roof of a broad oak-branch. Save for this happy upward curve of the branch, we are encompassed by breathless foliage; even the gloom was hot; the little insects that are food for fish tried a flight and fell on the water's surface, as if panting. Here and there, a sullen fish consented to take them, and a circle spread, telling of past excitement.

I had listened to the vicar's Homeric lowing for the space of a minute or so—what some one has called, the great beast-like, bellow-like, roar and roll of the Iliad hexameter: it stopped like a cut cord. One of the numerous daughters of his house appeared in the

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arch of white cluster-roses on the lower garden-terrace, and with an exclamation, stood petrified at the extraordinary spectacle, and then she laughed outright. I had hitherto resisted, but the young lady's frank and boisterous laughter carried me along, and I too let loose a peal, and discovered myself. The vicar, seeing me, acknowledged a consciousness of his absurd position with a laugh as loud. As for the scapegrace girl, she went off into a run of high-pitched shriekings like twenty woodpeckers, crying: 'Mama, mama, you look as if you were in Jordan!'

The vicar cleared his throat admonishingly, for it was apparent that Miss Alice was giving offence to her mother, and I presume he thought it was enough for one of the family to have done so.

'Wilt thou come out of Jordan?' I cried.

'I am sufficiently baptized with the water,' said the helpless man.

'Indeed, Mr. Amble,' observed his spouse, 'you can lecture a woman for not making the best of circumstances; I hope you'll bear in mind that it's you who are irreverent. I can endure this no longer. You deserve Mr. Pollingray's ridicule.'

Upon this, I interposed: 'Pray, ma'am, don't imagine that you have anything but sympathy from me. I——' but as I was protesting, having my mouth open, the terrible Miss Alice dragged the laughter remorselessly out of me.

'They have been trying Frank's new boat, Mr. Pollingray, and they've upset it. Oh! oh!' and again there was the woodpeckers' chorus.

'Alice, I desire you instantly to go and fetch John the gardener,' said the angry mother.

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‘Mama, I can’t move ; wait a minute, only a minute. John’s gone about the geraniums. Oh! don’t look so resigned, papa ; you’ll kill me! Mama, come and take my hand. Oh! oh!’

The young lady put her hands in against her waist and rolled her body like a possessed one.

‘Why don’t you come in through the boat-house?’ she asked when she had mastered her fit.

‘Ah!’ said the vicar. I beheld him struck by this new thought.

‘How utterly absurd you are, Mr. Amble!’ exclaimed his wife, ‘when you know that the boat-house is locked, and that the boat was lying under the camshot when you persuaded me to step into it.’

Hearing this explanation of the accident, Alice gave way to an ungovernable emotion.

‘You see, my dear,’ the vicar addressed his wife, ‘she can do nothing ; it’s useless. If ever patience is counselled to us, it is when accidents befall us, for then, as we are not responsible, we know we are in other hands, and it is our duty to be comparatively passive. Perhaps I may say that in every difficulty, patience is a life-belt. I beg of you to be patient still.’

‘Mr. Amble, I shall think you foolish,’ said the spouse, with a nod of more than emphasis.

‘My dear, you have only to decide,’ was the meek reply.

By this time, Miss Alice had so far conquered the fiend of laughter that she could venture to summon her mother close up to the bank and extend a rescuing hand. Mrs. Amble waded to within reach, her husband following. Arrangements were made for Alice to pull, and the vicar to push ; both in accordance with

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Mrs. Amble's stipulations, for even in her extremity of helplessness she affected rule and sovereignty. Unhappily, at the decisive moment, I chanced (and I admit it was more than an inadvertence on my part, it was a most ill-considered thing to do) I chanced, I say, to call out—and that I refrained from quoting Voltaire is something in my favour:—

‘How on earth did you manage to tumble in?’

There can be no contest of opinion that I might have kept my curiosity waiting, and possibly it may be said with some justification that I was the direct cause of my friend's unparalleled behaviour; but could a mortal man guess that in the very act of assisting his wife's return to dry land, and while she was—if I may put it so—modestly in his hands, he would turn about with a quotation that compared him to old Palinurus, all the while allowing his worthy and admirable burden to sink lower and dispread in excess upon the surface of the water, until the vantage of her daughter's help was lost to her; I beheld the consequences of my indiscretion, dismayed. I would have checked the preposterous Virgilian, but in contempt of my uplifted hand and averted head, and regardless of the fact that his wife was then literally dependent upon him, the vicar declaimed (and the drenching effect produced by Latin upon a lady at such a season, may be thought on):—

*‘Vix primos inopina quies laxaverat artus,
Et super incumbens, cum puppis parte revulsa
Cumque gubernaclo liquidas projecit in undas.’*

It is not easy when you are unacquainted with the language, to retort upon Latin, even when the attempt to do so is made in English. Very few even of the

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uneducated ears can tolerate such anti-climax vituperative as English after sounding Latin. Mrs. Amble kept down those sentiments which her vernacular might have expressed. I heard but one groan that came from her as she lay huddled indistinguishably in the arms of her husband.

‘Not—*praecipitem*! I am happy to say,’ my senseless friend remarked further, and laughed cheerfully as he fortified his statement with a run of negatives. ‘No, no’; in a way peculiar to him. ‘No, no. If I plant my grey hairs anywhere, it will be on dry land: no. But, now, my dear; he returned to his duty; why, you’re down again. Come: one, two, and up.’

He was raising a dead weight. The passion for sarcastic speech was manifestly at war with common prudence in the bosom of Mrs. Amble; prudence, however, overcame it. She cast on him a look of a kind that makes matrimony terrific in the dreams of bachelors, and then wedding her energy to the assistance given she made one of those senseless springs of the upper half of the body, which strike the philosophic eye with the futility of an effort that does not arise from a solid basis. Owing to the want of concert between them, the vicar’s impulsive strength was expended when his wife’s came into play. Alice clutched her mother bravely. The vicar had force enough to stay his wife’s descent; but Alice (she boasts of her muscle) had not the force in the other direction—and no wonder. There are few young ladies who could pull fourteen stone sheer up a camshot.

Mrs. Amble remained in suspense between the two.

‘Oh, Mr. Pollingray, if you were only on this side

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to help us,' Miss Alice exclaimed very piteously, though I could see that she was half mad with the internal struggle of laughter at the parents and concern for them.

'Now, pull, Alice,' shouted the vicar.

'No, not yet,' screamed Mrs. Amble; 'I'm sinking.'

'Pull, Alice.'

'Now, Mama.'

'Oh!'

'Push, Papa.'

'I'm down.'

'Up, Ma'am; Jane; woman, up.'

'Gently, Papa.'

'Abraham, I will *not*.'

'My dear, but you must.'

'And that man opposite.'

'What, Pollingray? He's fifty.'

I found myself walking indignantly down the path. Even now I protest my friend was guilty of bad manners, though I make every allowance for him; I excuse, I pass the order; but why—what justifies one man's bawling out another man's age? What purpose does it serve? I suppose the vicar wished to reassure his wife, on the principle (I have heard him enunciate it) that the sexes are merged at fifty—by which he means, I must presume, that something which may be good or bad, and is generally silly—of course, I admire and respect modesty and *pudeur* as much as any man—something has gone: a recognition of the bounds of division. There is, if that is a lamentable matter, a loss of certain of our young tricks at fifty. We have ceased to blush readily: and let me ask you to define a blush. Is it an involuntary truth or an

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ingenuous lie? I know that this will sound like the language of a man not a little jealous of his youthful compeers. I can but leave it to rightly judging persons to consider whether a healthy man in his prime, who has enough, and is not cursed by ambition, need be jealous of any living soul.

A shriek from Miss Alice checked my retreating steps. The vicar was staggering to support the breathing half of his partner while she regained her footing in the bed of the river. Their effort to scale the camshot had failed. Happily at this moment I caught sight of Master Frank's boat, which had floated, bottom upwards, against a projecting mud-bank of forget-me-nots. I contrived to reach it and right it, and having secured one of the sculls, I pulled up to the rescue; though not before I had plucked a flower, actuated by a motive that I cannot account for. The vicar held the boat firmly against the camshot, while I, at the imminent risk of joining them (I shall not forget the combined expression of Miss Alice's retreating eyes and the malicious corners of her mouth) hoisted the lady in, and the river with her. From the seat of the boat she stood sufficiently high to project the step towards land without peril. When she had set her foot there, we all assumed an attitude of respectful attention, and the vicar, who could soar over calamity like a fairweather swallow, acknowledged the return of his wife to the element with a series of apologetic yesses and short coughings.

'That would furnish a good concert for the poets,' he remarked. 'A parting, a separation of lovers; "even as a body from the water torn," or "from the water plucked"; eh? do you think—

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"so I weep round her, tearful in her track," an excellent——'

But the outraged woman, dripping in grievous discomfort above him, made a peremptory gesture. 'Mr. Amble, will you come on shore instantly, I have borne with your stupidity long enough. I insist upon your remembering, sir, that you have a family dependent upon you. Other men may commit these follies.'

This was a blow at myself, a bachelor whom the lady had never persuaded to dream of relinquishing his freedom.

'My dear, I am coming,' said the vicar.

'Then, come at once, or I shall think you idiotic,' the wife retorted.

'I have been endeavouring,' the vicar now addressed me, 'to prove by a practical demonstration that women are capable of as much philosophy as men, under any sudden and afflicting revolution of circumstances.'

'And if you get a sunstroke, you will be rightly punished, and I shall not be sorry, Mr. Amble.'

'I am coming, my dear Jane. Pray run into the house and change your things.'

'Not till I see you out of the water, sir.'

'You are losing your temper, my love.'

'You would make a saint lose his temper, Mr. Amble.'

'There were female saints, my dear,' the vicar mildly responded; and addressed me further: 'Up to this point, I assure you, Pollingray, no conduct could have been more exemplary than Mrs. Amble's. I had got her into the boat—a good boat, a capital boat—but getting in myself, we overturned. The first

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impulse of an ordinary woman would have been to reproach and scold; but Mrs. Amble succumbed only to the first impulse. Discovering that all effort unaided to climb the bank was fruitless, she agreed to wait patiently and make the best of circumstances; and she did; and she learnt to enjoy it. There is marrow in every bone. My dear Jane, I have never admired you so much. I tried her, Pollingray, in metaphysics. I talked to her of the opera we last heard, I think fifty years ago. And as it is less endurable for a woman to be patient in tribulation—the honour is greater when she overcomes the fleshy trial. Insomuch,' the vicar put on a bland air of abnegation of honour, 'that I am disposed to consider any male philosopher our superior; when you've found one, ha, ha—when you've found one. O sol pulcher! I am ready to sing that the day has been glorious, so far. Pulcher ille dies.'

Mrs. Amble appealed to me. 'Would anybody not swear that he is mad to see him standing waist-deep in the water and the sun on his bald head, I am reduced to entreat you not to—though you have no family of your own—*not* to encourage him. It is amusing to you. Pray, reflect that such folly is too often fatal. Compel him to come on shore.'

The logic of the appeal was no doubt distinctly visible in the lady's mind, though it was not accurately worded. I saw that I stood marked to be the scape-goat of the day, and humbly continued to deserve well, notwithstanding. By dint of simple signs and nods of affirmative, and a constant propulsion of my friend's arm, I drew him into the boat, and thence projected him up to the level with his wife, who had perhaps

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deigned to understand that it was best to avoid the arresting of his divergent mind by any remark during the passage, and remained silent. No sooner was he established on his feet, than she plucked him away.

‘Your papa’s hat,’ she called, flashing to her daughter, and streamed up the lawn into the rose-trellised pathways leading on aloft to the vicarage house. Behind roses the weeping couple disappeared. The last I saw of my friend was a smiting of his hand upon his head in a vain effort to catch at one of the fleeting ideas sowed in him by the quick passage of objects before his vision, and shaken out of him by abnormal hurry. The Rev. Abraham Amble had been lord of his wife in the water, but his innings was over. He had evidently enjoyed it vastly, and I now understood why he had chosen to prolong it as much as possible. Your eccentric characters are not uncommonly amateurs of petty artifice. There are hours of vengeance even for henpecked men.

I found myself sighing over the enslaved condition of every Benedict of my acquaintance, when the thought came like a surprise that I was alone with Alice. The fair and pleasant damsel made a clever descent into the boat, and having seated herself, she began to twirl the scull in the rowlock, and said: ‘Do you feel disposed to join me in looking after the other scull and papa’s hat, Mr. Pollingray?’ I suggested: ‘Will you not get your feet wet? I couldn’t manage to empty all the water in the boat.’

‘Oh!’ cried she, with a toss of her head; ‘wet feet never hurt young people.’

There was matter for an admonitory lecture in this.

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Let me confess I was about to give it, when she added :
'But Mr. Pollingray, I am really afraid that *your* feet are wet! You had to step into the water when you righted the boat.'

My reply was to jump down by her side with as much agility as I could combine with a proper discretion. The amateur craft rocked threateningly, and I found myself grasped by and grasping the pretty damsel, until by great good luck we were steadied and preserved from the same misfortune which had befallen her parents. She laughed and blushed, and we tottered asunder.

'Would you have talked metaphysics to me in the water, Mr. Pollingray?'

Alice was here guilty of one of those naughty sort of innocent speeches smacking of Eve most strongly; though, of course, of Eve in her best days.

I took the rudder lines to steer against the sculling of her single scull, and was Adam enough to respond to temptation: 'I should perhaps have been grateful to your charitable construction of it as being metaphysics.'

She laughed colloquially, to fill a pause. It had not been coquetry: merely the woman unconsciously at play. A man is bound to remember the seniority of his years when this occurs, for a veteran of ninety and a worn out young debauchee will equally be subject to it if they do not shun the society of the sex. My long robust health and perfect self-reliance apparently tend to give me unguarded moments, or lay me open to fitful impressions. Indeed there are times when I fear I have the heart of a boy, and

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certainly nothing more calamitous can be conceived, supposing that it should ever for one instant get complete mastery of my head. This is the peril of a man who has lived soberly. Do we never know when we are safe? I am, in reflecting thereupon, positively prepared to say that if there is no fool like what they call an old fool (and a man in his prime, who can be laughed at, is the world's old fool) there is wisdom in the wild oats theory, and I shall come round to my nephew's way of thinking: that is, as far as Master Charles by his acting represents his thinking. I shall at all events be more lenient in my judgement of him, and less stern in my allocutions, for I shall have no text to preach from.

We picked up the hat and the scull in one of the little muddy bays of our brown river, forming an amphitheatre for water-rats and draped with great dock-leaves, nettle-flowers, ragged robins, and other weeds for which the learned young lady gave the botanical names. It was pleasant to hear her speak with the full authority of absolute knowledge of her subject. She has intelligence. She is decidedly too good for Charles, unless he changes his method of living.

'Shall we row on?' she asked, settling her arms to work the pair of sculls.

'You have me in your power,' said I, and she struck out. Her shape is exceedingly graceful; I was charmed by the occasional tightening in of her lips as she exerted her muscle, while at intervals telling me of her race with one of her boastful younger brothers, whom she had beaten. I believe it is only when they are using physical exertion that the eyes of young girls

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have entire simplicity—the simplicity of nature as opposed to that other artificial simplicity which they learn from their governesses, their mothers, and the admiration of witlings. Attractive purity, or the nice glaze of no-comprehension of anything which is considered to be improper in a wicked world, and is no doubt very useful, is not to my taste. French girls, as a rule, cannot compete with our English in the purer graces. They are only incomparable when as women they have resort to art.

Alice could look at me as she rowed, without thinking it necessary to force a smile, or to speak, or to snigger and be foolish. I felt towards the girl like a comrade.

We went no further than Hatchard's mile, where the water plumps the poor sleepy river from a side-stream, and, as it turned the boat's head quite round, I let the boat go. These studies of young women are very well as a pastime; but they soon cease to be a recreation. She forms an agreeable picture when she is rowing, and possesses a musical laugh. Now and then she gives way to the bad trick of laughing without caring or daring to explain the cause for it. She is moderately well-bred. I hope that she has principle. Certain things a man of my time of life learns by associating with very young people which are serviceable to him. What a different matter this earth must be to that girl from what it is to me! I knew it before. And—mark the difference—I feel it now.

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CHAPTER II

She

Papa never will cease to meet with accidents and adventures. If he only walks out to sit for half an hour with one of his old dames, as he calls them, something is sure to happen to him, and it is almost as sure that Mr. Pollingray will be passing at the time and mixed up in it.

Since Mr. Pollingray's return from his last residence on the Continent, I have learnt to know him and like him. Charles is unjust to his uncle. He is not at all the grave kind of man I expected from Charles's description. He is extremely entertaining, and then he understands the world, and I like to hear him talk, he is so unpretentious and uses just the right words. No one would imagine his age, from his appearance, and he has more fun than any young man I have listened to.

But, I am convinced I have discovered his weakness. It is my fatal peculiarity that I cannot be with people ten minutes without seeing some point about them where they are tenderest. Mr. Pollingray *wants to be thought quite youthful*. He can bear any amount of fatigue; he is always fresh and a delightful companion; but you cannot get him to show even a shadow of exhaustion or to admit that he ever knew what it was to lie down beaten. This is really to pretend that he is superhuman. I like him so much that I could wish him superior to such—it is nothing other than—vanity. Which is worse? A young man

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giving himself the air of a sage, or—but no one can call Mr. Pollingray an old man. He is a confirmed bachelor. That puts the case. Charles, when he says of him that he is a ‘gentleman in a good state of preservation,’ means to be ironical. I doubt whether Charles at fifty would object to have the same said of Mr. Charles Everett. Mr. Pollingray has always looked to his health. He has not been disappointed. I am sure he was always very good. But, whatever he was, he is now very pleasant, and he does not talk to women as if he thought them singular, and feel timid, I mean, confused, as some men show that they feel—the good ones. Perhaps he felt so once, and that is why he is still free. Charles’s dread that his uncle will marry is most unworthy. He never will, but why should he not? Mama declares that he is waiting for a woman of intellect, I can hear her: ‘Depend upon it, a woman of intellect will marry Dayton Manor.’ Should that mighty event not come to pass, poor Charles will have to sink the name of Everett in that of Pollingray. Mr. Pollingray’s name is the worst thing about him. When I think of his name I see him ten times older than he is. My feelings are in harmony with his pedigree concerning the age of the name. One would have to be a woman of profound intellect to see the advantage of sharing it. ‘Mrs. Pollingray!’ She must be a lady with a wig.

It was when we were rowing up by Hatchard’s mill that I first perceived his weakness, he was looking at me so kindly, and speaking of his friendship for papa, and how glad he was to be fixed at last, near to us at Dayton. I wished to use some term of endearment in reply, and said, I remember, ‘Yes, and we are also

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glad, *Godpapa*.' I was astonished that he should look so disconcerted, and went on: 'Have you forgotten that you are my godpapa?'

He answered: 'Am I? Oh! yes—the name of Alice.'

Still he looked uncertain, uncomfortable, and I said: 'Do you want to cancel the past, and cast me off?'

'No, certainly not'; he, I suppose, though the was assuring me.

I saw his lips move at the words 'cancel the past,' though he did not speak them out. He positively blushed. I know the sort of *young* man he must have been. Exactly the sort of young man mama would like for a son-in-law, and her daughters would accept in pure obedience when reduced to be capable of the virtue by rigorous diet, or consumption.

He let the boat go round instantly. This was enough for me. It struck me then that when papa had said to mama (as he did in that absurd situation) 'He is fifty,' Mr. Pollingray must have heard it across the river, for he walked away hurriedly. He came back, it is true, with the boat, but I have my own ideas. He is always ready to do a service, but on this occasion I think it was an afterthought. I shall not venture to call him 'Godpapa' again.

Indeed, if I have a desire, it is that I may be blind to people's weakness. My insight is inveterate. Papa says he has heard Mr. Pollingray boast of his age. If so, there has come a change over him. I cannot be deceived. I see it constantly. After my unfortunate speech, Mr. Pollingray shunned our house for two whole weeks, and scarcely bowed to us when coming out of church. Miss Pollingray idolises him—spoils

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him. She says that he is worth twenty of Charles. Nous savons ce que nous savons, nous autres. Charles is wild, but Charles would be above these littlenesses. How could Miss Pollingray comprehend the romance of Charles's nature?

My sister Evelina is now Mr. Pollingray's favourite. She could not say Godpapa to him, if she would. Persons who are very much petted at home, are always establishing favourites abroad. For my part, let them praise me or not, I know that I can do anything I set my mind upon. At present I choose to be frivolous. I know I am frivolous. What then? If there is fun in the world am I not to laugh at it? I shall astonish them by and by. But, I will laugh while I can. I am sure, there is so much misery in the world, it is a mercy to be able to laugh. Mr. Follingray may think what he likes of me. When Charles tells me that I must do my utmost to propitiate his uncle, he cannot mean that I am to refrain from laughing, because that is being a hypocrite, which I may become when I have gone through all the potential moods and not before.

It is preposterous to suppose that I am to be tied down to the views of life of elderly people.

I dare say I did laugh a little too much the other night, but could I help it? We had a dinner party. Present were Mr. Pollingray, Mrs. Kershaw, the Wilbury people (three), Charles, my brother Duncan, Evelina, mama, papa, myself, and Mr. and Mrs. (put them last for emphasis) Romer Pattlecombe, Mrs. Pattlecombe (the same number of syllables as Pollingray, and a 'P' to begin with) is thirty-one years her husband's junior, and she is twenty-six; full of fun,

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and always making fun of him, the mildest, kindest, *goody* old thing, who has never distressed himself for anything and never will. Mrs. Romer not only makes fun, but is fun. When you have done laughing with her, you can laugh at her. She is the salt of society in these parts. Some one, as we were sitting on the lawn after dinner, alluded to the mishap to papa and mama, and mama, who has never forgiven Mr. Pollingray for having seen her in her ridiculous plight, said that men were in her opinion greater gossips than women. 'That is indisputable, ma'am,' said Mr. Pollingray, he loves to bewilder her; 'only, we never mention it.'

'There is an excuse for *us*,' said Mrs. Romer; '*our* trials are so great, we require a diversion, and so we talk of others.'

'Now really,' said Charles, 'I don't think your trials are equal to ours.'

For which remark papa bantered him, and his uncle was sharp on him; and Charles, I know, spoke half seriously, though he was seeking to draw Mrs. Romer out: he has troubles.

From this, we fell upon a comparison of sufferings, and Mrs. Romer took up the word. She is a fair, smallish, nervous woman, with delicate hands and outlines, exceedingly sympathetic; so much so that while you are telling her anything, she makes half a face in anticipation, and is ready to shriek with laughter or shake her head with uttermost grief; and sometimes, if you let her go too far in one direction, she does both. All her narrations are with ups and downs of her hands, her eyes, her chin, and her voice. Taking poor, good old Mr. Romer by the roll of his

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coat, she made as if posing him, and said: 'There! Now, it's all very well for you to say that there is anything equal to a woman's sufferings in this world. I do declare you know nothing of what we unhappy women have to endure. It's dreadful! No male creature can possibly know what tortures *I* have to undergo.'

Mama neatly contrived, after interrupting her, to divert the subject. I think that all the ladies imagined they were in jeopardy, but I knew Mrs. Romer was perfectly to be trusted. She has wit which pleases, jusqu'aux ongles, and her sense of humour never overrides her discretion with more than a glance—never with preparation.

'Now,' she pursued, 'let me tell you what excruciating trials I have to go through. This man,' she rocked the patient old gentleman to and fro, 'this man will be the death of me. He is utterly devoid of a sense of propriety. Again and again I say to him—cannot the tailor cut down these trowsers of yours? Yes, Mr. Amble, you preach patience to women, but this is too much for any woman's endurance. Now, do attempt to picture to yourself what an agony it must be to me:—he *will* shave, and he *will* wear those enormously high trowsers that, when they are braced, reach up behind to the nape of his neck! Only yesterday morning, as I was lying in bed, I could see him in his dressing-room. I tell you: he will shave, and he will choose the time for shaving early after he has braced these immensely high trowsers that make such a placard of him. Oh, my goodness! My dear Romer,—I have said to him fifty times if I have said it once, my goodness me!—*why* can you not get

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decent trowsers such as other men wear? He has but one answer—he has been accustomed to wear those trowsers, and he would not feel at home in another pair. And what does he say if I continue to complain? and I cannot *but* continue to complain, for it is not only moral, it is physical torment to see the sight he makes of himself; he says: “My dear, you should not have married an old man.” What! I say to him, *must* an old man wear antiquated trowsers? No! nothing will turn him; those are his habits. But, you have not heard the worst. The sight of those hideous trowsers totally destroying all shape in the man, is horrible enough; but it is absolutely more than a woman can bear to see him—for he will shave—first cover his face with white soap with that ridiculous centre-piece to his trowsers reaching quite up to his poll, and then, you can fancy a woman’s rage and anguish! the figure lifts its nose by the extremist tip. Oh! it’s degradation! What respect can a woman have for her husband after that sight? Imagine it! And I have implored him to spare me. It’s useless. You sneer at our hoops and say that you are inconvenienced by them: but you gentlemen are not degraded,—Oh! unutterably!—as I am every morning of my life by that cruel spectacle of a husband.’

I have but faintly sketched Mrs. Romer’s style. Evelina, who is prudish and thinks her vulgar, refused to laugh, but it came upon me, as the picture of ‘your own old husband,’ with so irresistibly comic an effect that I was overcome by convulsions of laughter. I do not defend myself. It was as much a fit as any other attack. I did all I could to arrest it. At last,

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I ran indoors and upstairs to my bedroom and tried hard to become dispossessed. I am sure I was an example of the sufferings of my sex. It could hardly have been worse for Mrs. Romer than it was for me. I was drowned in internal laughter long after I had got a grave face. Early in the evening Mr. Pollingray left us.

CHAPTER III

He

I am carried by the fascination of a musical laugh. Apparently I am doomed to hear it at my own expense. We are secure from nothing in this life.

I have determined to stand for the county. An unoccupied man is a prey to every hook of folly. Be dilettante all your days, and you might as fairly hope to reap a moral harvest as if you had chased butterflies. The activities created by a profession or determined pursuit are necessary to the growth of the mind.

Heavens! I find myself writing like an illegitimate son of La Rochefoucauld, or of Vauvenargues. But, it is true that I am fifty years old, and I am not mature. I am undeveloped somewhere.

The question for me to consider is, whether this development is to be accomplished by my being guilty of an act of egregious folly.

Dans la cinquantaine! The reflection should produce a gravity in men. Such a number of years will not ring like bridal bells in a man's ears. I have my books about me, my horses, my dogs, a contented

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household. I move in the centre of a perfect machine, and I am dissatisfied. I rise early. I do not digest badly. What is wrong?

The calamity of my case is that I am in danger of betraying what is wrong with me to others, without knowing it myself. Some woman will be suspecting and tattling, because she has nothing else to do. Girls have wonderfully shrewd eyes for a weakness in the sex which they are instructed to look upon as superior. But I am on my guard.

The fact is manifest: I feel I have been living more or less uselessly. It is a fat time. There are a certain set of men in every prosperous country who, having wherewithal, and not being compelled to toil, become subjected to the moral ideal. Most of them in the end sit down with our sixth Henry or second Richard and philosophise on shepherds. To be no better than a simple hind! Am I better? Prime bacon and an occasional draft of shrewd beer content him, and they do not me. Yet I am sound, and can sit through the night and be ready, and on the morrow I shall stand for the county.

I made the announcement that I had thoughts of entering Parliament, before I had half formed the determination, at my sister's lawn party yesterday.

'Gilbert!' she cried, and raised her hands. A woman is hurt if you do not confide to her your plans as soon as you can conceive them. She must be present to assist at the birth, or your plans are unblest plans.

I had been speaking aside in a casual manner to my friend Amble, whose idea is that the Church is not represented with sufficient strength in the Commons,

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and who at once, as I perceived, grasped the notion of getting me to promote sundry measures connected with schools and clerical stipends, for his eyes dilated; he said: 'Well, if you do, I can put you up to several things,' and imparting the usual chorus of yesses to his own mind, he continued absently: 'Pollingray might be made strong on church rates. There is much to do. He has lived abroad and requires schooling in these things. We want a man. Yes, yes, yes. It's a good idea; a notion.'

My sister, however, was of another opinion. She did me the honour to take me aside.

'Gilbert, were you serious just now?'

'Quite serious. Is it not my characteristic?'

'Not on these occasions. I saw the idea come suddenly upon you. You were looking at Charles.'

'Continue: and at what was he looking?'

'He was looking at Alice Amble.'

'And the young lady?'

'She looked at you.'

I was here attacked by a singularly pertinacious fly, and came out of the contest with a laugh.

'Did she have that condescension towards me? And from the glance, my resolution to enter Parliament was born? It is the French *vaudevilliste's* doctrine of great events from little causes. The slipper of a soubrette trips the heart of a king and changes the destiny of a nation—the history of mankind. It may be true. If I were but shot into the House from a little girl's eye!'

With this I took her arm gaily, walked with her, and had nearly overreached myself with excess of cunning. I suppose we are reduced to see more

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plainly that which we systematically endeavour to veil from others. It is best to flutter a handkerchief, instead of nailing up a curtain. The principal advantage is that you may thereby go on deceiving yourself, for this reason: few sentiments are wholly matter of fact; but when they are half so, you make them concrete by deliberately seeking either to crush or conceal them, and you are doubly betrayed—betrayed to the besieging eye and to yourself. When a sentiment has grown to be a passion (mercifully may I be spared!) different tactics are required. By that time, you will have already betrayed yourself too deeply to dare to be flippant: the investigating eye is aware that it has been purposely diverted: knowing some things, it makes sure of the rest from which you turn it away. If you want to hide a very grave case, you must speak gravely about it. At which season, be but sure of your voice, and simulate a certain depth of sentimental philosophy, and you may once more, and for a long period, bewilder the investigator of the secrets of your bosom. To sum up: in the preliminary stages of a weakness, be careful that you do not show your own alarm, or all will be suspected. Should the weakness turn to fever, let a little of it be seen, like a careless man, and nothing will really be thought.

I can say this, I can do this; and is it still possible that a pin's point has got through the joints of the armour of a man like me?

Elizabeth quitted my side with the conviction that I am as considerate an uncle as I am an affectionate brother.

I said to her, apropos, 'I have been observing those

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two. It seems to me they are deciding things for themselves.'

'I have been going to speak to you about them Gilbert,' said she.

And I: 'The girl must be studied. The family is good. While Charles is in Wales, you must have her at Dayton. She laughs rather vacantly, don't you think? but the *sound* of it has the proper wholesome ring. I will give her what attention I can while she is here, but in the meantime I must have a bride of my own and commence courting.'

'Parliament, you mean,' said Elizabeth with a frank and tender smile. The hostess was summoned to welcome a new guest, and she left me, pleased with her successful effort to reach my meaning, and absorbed by it.

I would not have challenged Machiavelli; but I should not have encountered the Florentine ruefully. I feel the same keen delight in intellectual dexterity. On some points my sister is not a bad match for me. She can beat me seven games out of twelve at chess; but the five I win sequently, for then I am awake. There is natural art and artificial art, and the last beats the first. Fortunately for us, women are strangers to the last. They have had to throw off a mask before they have got the schooling; so, when they are thus armed we know what we meet, and what are the weapons to be used.

Alice, if she is a fine fencer at all, will expect to meet the ordinary English squire in me. I have seen her at the baptismal font! It is inconceivable. She will fancy that at least she is ten times more subtle than I. When I get the mastery—it is unlikely to

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make me the master. What may happen is, that the nature of the girl will declare itself, under the hard light of intimacy, vulgar. Charles I cause to be absent for six weeks; so there will be time enough for the probation. I do not see him till he returns. If by chance I had come earlier to see him and he to allude to her, he would have had my conscience on his side, and that is what a scrupulous man takes care to prevent.

I wonder whether my friends imagine me to be the same man whom they knew as Gilbert Pollingray a month back? I see the change, I feel the change; but I have no retrospection, no remorse, no looking forward, no feeling: none for others, very little for myself. I am told that I am losing fluency as a dinner-table talker. There is now more savour to me in a silvery laugh than in a spiced wit. And this is the man who knows women, and is far too modest to give a decided opinion upon any of their merits. Search myself through as I may, I cannot tell when the change began, or what the change consists of, or what is the matter with me, or what charm there is in the person who does the mischief. She is the counterpart of dozens of girls; lively, brown-eyed, brown-haired, underbred—it is not too harsh to say so—underbred slightly; half-educated, whether quick-witted I dare not opine. She is undoubtedly the last whom I or another person would have fixed upon as one to work me this unmitigated evil. I do not know her, and I believe I do not care to know her, and I am thirsting for the hour to come when I shall study her. Is not this to have the poison of a bite in one's blood? The wrath of Venus is not a fable. I was

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a hard reader and I despised the sex in my youth, before the family estates fell to me; since when I have playfully admired the sex; I have dallied with a passion, and not read at all, save for diversion: her anger is not a fable. You may interpret many a mythic tale by the facts which lie in your own blood. My emotions have lain altogether dormant in sentimental attachment. I have, I suppose, boasted of Python slain, and Cupid has touched me up with an arrow. I trust to my own skill rather than to his mercy for avoiding a second from his quiver. I will understand this girl if I have to submit to a close intimacy with her for six months. There is no doubt of the elegance of her movements. Charles might as well take his tour, and let us see him again next year. Yes, her movements are (or will be) gracious. In a year's time she will have acquired the fuller tones and poetry of womanliness. Perhaps then, too, her smile will linger instead of flashing. I have known infinitely lovelier women than she. One I have known! but let her be. Louise and I have long since said adieu.

CHAPTER IV

She

Behold me installed in Dayton Manor House, and brought here for the express purpose (so Charles has written me word) of my being studied, that it may be seen whether I am worthy to be, on some august future occasion—possibly—a member (Oh, so much to mumble!) of this great family. Had I known it when

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I was leaving home, I should have countermanded the cording of my boxes. If you please, I do the packing, and not the cording. I must practise being polite, or I shall be horrifying these good people.

I am mortally offended. I am very very angry. I shall show temper. Indeed, I have shown it. Mr. Pollingray must and does think me a goose. Dear sir, and I think you are justified. If any one pretends to guess how, I have names to suit that person. I am a ninny, an ape, and mind I call myself these bad things because I deserve worse. I am flighty, I believe I am heartless. Charles is away, and I suffer no pangs. The truth is, I fancied myself so exceedingly penetrating, and it was my vanity looking in a glass. I saw something that answered to my nods and how-d'ye-do's and—but I am ashamed, and so penitent I might begin making a collection of beetles. I cannot lift up my head.

Mr. Pollingray is such a different man from the one I had imagined! What that one was, I have now quite forgotten. I remember too clearly what the wretched guesser was. I have been three weeks at Dayton, and if my sisters know me when I return to the vicarage, they are not foolish virgins. For my part, I know that I shall always hate Mrs. Romer Pattlecombe, and that I am unjust to the good woman, but I do hate her, and I think the stories shocking, and wonder *intensely* what it was that I could have found in them to laugh at. I shall never laugh again for many years. Perhaps, when I am an old woman, I may. I wish the time had come. All young people seem to me so helplessly silly. I am one of them for the present, and have no hope that I can appear to

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be anything else. The young are a crowd—a shoal of small fry. Their elders are the select of the world.

On the morning of the day when I was to leave home for Dayton, a distance of eight miles, I looked out of my window while dressing—as early as half-past seven—and I saw Mr. Pollingray's groom on horseback, leading up and down the walk a darling little, round, plump, black cob that made my heart leap with an immense bound of longing to be on it and away across the downs. And then the maid came to my door with a letter:—

‘Mr. Pollingray, in return for her considerate good behaviour and saving of trouble to him officially, begs his goddaughter to accept the accompanying little animal: height 14 h., age $3\frac{1}{4}$ years; hunts, is sure-footed, and likely to be the best jumper in the county.’

I flew downstairs. I rushed out of the house and up to my treasure, and kissed his nose and stroked his mane. I could not get my fingers away from him. Horses are so like the very best and beautifullest of women when you caress them. They show their pleasure so at being petted. They curve their necks, and paw, and look proud. They take your flattery like sunshine and are lovely in it. I kissed my beauty, peering at his black-mottled skin, which is like Allingborough Heath in the twilight. The smell of his new saddle and bridle-leather was sweeter than a garden to me. The man handed me a large riding-whip mounted with silver. I longed to jump up and ride till midnight.

Then mama and papa came out and read the note

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and looked at my darling little cob, and my sisters saw him and kissed me, for they are not envious girls. The most distressing thing was that we had not a riding-habit in the family. I was ready to wear any sort. I would have ridden as a guy rather than not ride at all. But mama gave me a promise that in two days a riding-habit should be sent on to Dayton, and I had to let my pet be led back from where he came. I had no life till I was following him. I could have believed him to be a fairy prince who had charmed me. I called him Prince Leboo, because he was black and good. I forgive anybody who talks about first love after what my experience has been with Prince Leboo.

What papa thought of the present I do not know, but I know very well what mama thought: and for my part I thought everything, not distinctly including *that*, for I could not suppose such selfishness in one so generous as Mr. Pollingray. But I came to Dayton in a state of arrogant pride, that gave assurance if not ease to my manners. I thanked Mr. Pollingray warmly, but in a way to let him see it was the matter of a horse between us. 'You give, I register thanks, and there's an end.'

He thinks me a fool! a fool!

'My habit,' I said, 'comes after me. I hope we shall have some rides together.'

'Many,' replied Mr. Pollingray, and his bow inflated me with ideas of my condescension.

And because Miss Pollingray (Queen Elizabeth he calls her) looked half sad, I read it——! I do not write what I read it to be.

Behold the uttermost fool of all female creation led

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over the house by Mr. Pollingray. He showed me the family pictures.

‘I am no judge of pictures, Mr. Pollingray.’

‘You will learn to see the merits of these.’

‘I’m afraid not, though I were to study them for years.’

‘You may have that opportunity.’

‘Oh! that is more than I can expect.’

‘You will develop intelligence on such subjects by and by.’

A dull sort of distant blow struck me in this remark, but I paid no heed to it.

He led me over the gardens and the grounds. The Great John Methlyn Pollingray planted those trees, and designed the house, and the flower-garden still speaks of his task; but he is not *my* master, and consequently I could not share his three great-grandsons’ veneration for him. There are high fir-woods and beech woods, and a long ascending narrow meadow between them, through which a brook falls in continual cascades. It is the sort of scene I love, for it has a woodland grandeur and seclusion that leads me to think, and makes a better girl of me. But what I said was: ‘Yes, it is the place of all others to come and settle in for the evening of one’s days.’

‘You could not take to it now?’ said Mr. Pollingray.

‘Now?’ my expression of face must have been a picture.

‘You feel called upon to decline such a residence in the morning of your days?’

He persisted in looking at me as he spoke, and I felt like something withering scarlet.

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I am convinced he saw through me, while his face was polished brass. My self-possession returned, for my pride was not to be dispersed immediately.

‘Please, take me to the stables,’ I entreated; and there I was at home. There I saw my Prince Leboo, and gave him a thousand caresses.

‘He knows me already,’ I said.

‘Then he is some degrees in advance of me,’ said Mr. Pollingray.

Is not cold dissection of one’s character a cruel proceeding? And I think, too, that a form of hospitality like this by which I am invited to be analysed at leisure, is both mean and base. I have been kindly treated and I am grateful, but I do still say (even though I may have improved under it) it is unfair.

To proceed: the dinner hour arrived. The atmosphere of his own house seems to favour Mr. Pollingray as certain soils and sites favour others. He walked into the dining-room between us with his hands behind him, talking to us both so easily and smoothly cheerfully—naturally and pleasantly—inimitable by any young man! You hardly feel the change of room. We were but three at table, but there was no lack of entertainment. Mr. Pollingray is an admirable host; he talks just enough himself and helps you to talk. What does comfort me is that it gives him real pleasure to see a hearty appetite. Young men, I know it for a certainty, never quite like us to be so human. Ah! which is right? I would not miss the faith in our nobler essence which Charles has. But, *is* it nobler? One who has lived longer in the world ought to know better, and Mr. Pollingray approves of naturalness in everything. I have now seen through

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Charles's eyes for several months; so implicitly that I am timid when I dream of trusting to another's judgement. It is, however, a fact that I am not quite natural with Charles.

Every day Mr. Pollingray puts on evening dress out of deference to his sister. If young men had these good habits they would gain our respect, and lose their own self-esteem less early.

After dinner I sang. Then Mr. Pollingray read an amusing essay to us, and retired to his library. Miss Pollingray sat and talked to me of her brother, and of her nephew—for *whom* it is that Mr. Pollingray is beginning to receive company, and is going into society. Charles's subsequently received letter explained the 'receive company.' I could not comprehend it at the time.

'The house has been shut up for years, or rarely inhabited by us for more than a month in the year. Mr. Pollingray prefers France. All his associations, I may say his sympathies, are in France. Latterly he seems to have changed a little; but from Normandy to Touraine and Dauphiny—we had a triangular home over there. Indeed, we have it still. I am never certain of my brother.'

While Miss Pollingray was speaking, my eyes were fixed on a Vidal crayon drawing, faintly coloured with chalks, of a foreign lady—I could have sworn to her being French—young, quite girlish, I doubt if her age was more than mine.

'She is pretty, is she not?' said Miss Pollingray.

'She is almost beautiful,' I exclaimed, and Miss Pollingray, seeing my curiosity, was kind enough not to keep me in suspense.

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‘That is the Marquise de Mazardouin—*née* Louise de Riverolles. You will see other portraits of her in the house. This is the most youthful of them, if I except one representing a baby, and bearing her initials.’

I remembered having noticed a similarity of feature in some of the portraits in the different rooms. My longing to look at them again was like a sudden jet of flame within me. There was no chance of seeing them till morning; so, promising myself to dream of the face before me, I dozed through a conversation with my hostess, until I had got the French lady’s eyes and hair and general outline stamped accurately, as I hoped, on my mind. I was no sooner on my way to bed than all had faded. The torment of trying to conjure up that face was inconceivable. I lay, and tossed, and turned to right and to left, and scattered my sleep; but by and by my thoughts reverted to Mr. Pollingray, and then like sympathetic ink held to the heat, I beheld her again; but vividly, as she must have been when she was sitting to the artist. The hair was naturally crisped, waving thrice over the forehead and brushed clean from the temples, showing the small ears, and tied in a knot loosely behind. Her eyebrows were thick and dark, but soft; flowing eyebrows; far lovelier, to my thinking, than any pencilled arch. Dark eyes, and full, not prominent. I find little expression of inward sentiment in very prominent eyes. On the contrary they seem to have a fish-like dependency of gaze on what is without, and show fishy depths, if any. For instance, my eyes are rather prominent, and I am just the little fool—but the French lady is my theme.

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Madame la Marquise, your eyes are sweeter to me than celestial. I never saw such candour and unaffected innocence in eyes before. Accept the compliment of the pauvre Anglaise. Did you do mischief with them? Did Vidal's delicate sketch do justice to you? Your lips and chin and your throat all repose in such girlish grace, that if ever it is my good fortune to see you, you will not be aged to me!

I slept and dreamed of her.

In the morning, I felt certain that she had often said: 'Mon cher Gilbert,' to Mr. Pollingray. Had he ever said: 'Ma chere Louise?' He might have said: '*Ma bien aimée!*' for it was a face to be loved.

My change of feeling towards him dates from that morning. He had previously seemed to me a man so much older. I perceived in him now a youthfulness beyond mere vigour of frame. I could not detach him from my dreams of the night. He insists upon addressing me by the terms of our 'official' relationship, as if he made it a principle of our intercourse.

'Well, and is your godpapa to congratulate you on your having had a quiet rest?' was his greeting.

I answered stupidly: 'Oh, yes, thank you,' and would have given worlds for the courage to reply in French, but I distrusted my accent. At breakfast, the opportunity or rather the excuse for an attempt, was offered. His French valet, François, waits on him at breakfast. Mr. Pollingray and his sister asked for things in the French tongue, and, as if fearing some breach of civility, Mr. Pollingray asked me if I knew French.

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‘Yes, I know it; that is, I understand it,’ I stuttered.

‘Allons, nous parlerons français,’ said he. But I shook my head, and remained like a silly mute.

I was induced towards the close of the meal to come out with a few French words. I was utterly shamefaced. Mr. Pollingray has got the French manner of protesting that one is all but perfect in one’s speaking. I know how absurd it must have sounded. But I felt his kindness, and in my heart I thanked him humbly. I believe now that a residence in France does not deteriorate an Englishman. Mr. Pollingray, when in his own house, has the best qualities of the two countries. He is gay, and, yes, while he makes a study of me, I am making a study of him. Which of us two will know the other first? He was papa’s college friend—papa’s junior, of course, and infinitely more papa’s junior now. I observe that weakness in him, I mean, his clinging to youthfulness, less and less; but I do see it, I cannot be quite in error. The truth is, I begin to feel that I cannot venture to mistrust my infallible judgement, or I shall have no confidence in myself at all.

After breakfast, I was handed over to Miss Pollingray, with the intimation that I should not see him till dinner.

‘Gilbert is anxious to cultivate the society of his English neighbours, now that he has, as he supposes, really settled among them,’ she remarked to me. ‘At his time of life, the desire to be useful is almost a malady. But, he cherishes the poor, and that is more than an occupation, it is a virtue.’

Her speech has become occasionally French in the construction of the sentences.

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‘Mais oui,’ I said shyly, and being alone with her, I was not rebuffed by her smile, especially as she encouraged me on.

I am, she told me, to see a *monde* of French people here in September. So, the story of me is to be completer, or continued in September. I could not get Miss Pollingray to tell me distinctly whether Madame la Marquise will be one of the guests. But I know that she is not a widow. In that case, she has a husband. In that case, what is the story of her relations towards Mr. Pollingray? There must be some story. He would not surely have so many portraits of her about the house (and they travel with him wherever he goes) if she were but a lovely face to him. I cannot understand it. They were frequent, constant visitors to one another’s estates in France; always together. Perhaps a man of Mr. Pollingray’s age, or perhaps M. le Marquis—and here I lose myself. French habits are so different from ours. One thing I am certain of: no charge can be brought against *my Englishman*. I read perfect rectitude in his face. I would cast anchor by him. He must have had a dreadful unhappiness.

Mama kept her promise by sending my riding-habit and hat punctually, but I had run far ahead of all the wishes I had formed when I left home, and I half feared my ride out with Mr. Pollingray. That was before I had received Charles’s letter, letting me know the object of my invitation here. I require at times a morbid pride to keep me up to the work. I suppose I rode befittingly, for Mr. Pollingray praised my seat on horseback. I know I can ride, or feel

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the *blast of a horse like my own*—as he calls it. Yet he never could have had a duller companion. My conversation was all yes and no, as if it went on a pair of crutches like a miserable cripple. I was humiliated and vexed. All the while I was trying to lead up to the French lady, and I could not commence with a single question. He appears to have really *cancelled the past* in every respect save his calling me his god-daughter. His talk was of the English poor, and vegetation, and papa's goodness to his old dames in Ickleworth parish, and defects in my education—acknowledged by me, but not likely to restore me in my depressed state. The ride was beautiful. We went the length of a twelve-mile ridge between Ickleworth and Hillford, over high commons, with immense views on both sides, and through beech-woods, oak-woods, and furzy dells and downs spotted with juniper and yew-trees—old picnic haunts of mine, but Mr. Pollingray's fresh delight in the landscape made them seem new and strange. Home through the valley.

The next day Miss Pollingray joined us, wearing a *feutre gris* and green plume, which looked exceedingly odd until you became accustomed to it. Her hair has decided gray streaks, and that, and the Queen Elizabeth nose, and the *feutre gris*!—but she is so kind, I could not even smile in my heart. It is singular that Mr. Pollingray, who's but three years her junior, should look at least twenty years younger—at the very least. His moustache and beard are of the colour of a corn sheaf, and his blue eyes shining over them remind me of summer. That describes him. He is summer, and has not fallen into his autumn

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yet. Miss Pollingray helped me to talk a little. She tried to check her brother's enthusiasm for our scenery, and extolled the French *paysage*. He laughed at her, for when they were in France it was she who used to say, 'There is nothing here like England!' Miss Fool rode between them attentive to the jingling of the bells in her cap: 'Yes' and 'No' at anybody's command, in and out of season.

Thank you, Charles, for your letter! I was beginning to think my invitation to Dayton inexplicable, when that letter arrived. I cannot but deem it an unworthy baseness to entrap a girl to study her without a warning to her. I went up to my room after I had read it, and wrote in reply till the breakfast-bell rang. I resumed my occupation an hour later, and wrote till one o'clock. In all, fifteen pages of writing, which I carefully folded and addressed to Charles; sealed the envelope, stamped it, and destroyed it. I went to bed. 'No, I won't ride out to-day, I have a headache!' I repeated this about half-a-dozen times to nobody's knocking on the door, and when at last somebody knocked I tried to repeat it once, but having the message that Mr. Pollingray particularly wished to have my company in a ride, I rose submissively and cried. This humiliation made my temper ferocious. Mr. Pollingray observed my face, and put it down in his notebook. 'A savage disposition,' or, no, 'An untamed little rebel'; for he has hopes of me. He had the cruelty to say so.

'What I am, I shall remain,' said I.

He informed me that it was perfectly natural for me to think it; and on my replying that persons ought to know themselves best: 'At my age, perhaps,' he

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said, and added, 'I cannot speak very confidently of my knowledge of myself.'

'Then you make us out to be nothing better than puppets, Mr. Pollingray.'

'If we have missed an early apprenticeship to the habit of self-command, *ma filleule*.'

'*Merci, mon parrain*.'

He laughed. My French, I suppose.

I determined that, if he wanted to study me, I would help him.

'I can command myself when I choose, but it is only when I choose.'

This seemed to me quite a reasonable speech, until I found him looking for something to follow, in explanation, and on coming to sift my meaning, I saw that it was temper, and getting more angry, continued:

'The sort of young people who have such wonderful command of themselves are not the pleasantest.'

'No,' he said; 'they disappoint us. We expect folly from the young.'

I shut my lips. Prince Leboo knew that he must go, and a good gallop reconciled me to circumstances. Then I was put to jumping little furzes and ditches, which one cannot pretend to do without a fair appearance of gaiety; for, while you are running the risk of a tumble, you are compelled to look cheerful and gay, at least, I am. To fall frowning will never do. I had no fall. My gallant Leboo made my heart leap with love of him, though mill-stones were tied to it. I may be vexed when I begin, but I soon ride out a bad temper. And he is mine! I am certainly inconstant to Charles, for I think of Leboo fifty times more. Besides, there is no engagement as yet between Charles

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and me. I have first to be approved worthy by Mr. and Miss Pollingray: two pairs of eyes and ears, over which I see a solemnly downy owl sitting, conning their reports of me. It is a very unkind ordeal to subject any inexperienced young woman to. It was harshly conceived and it is being remorselessly executed. I would complain more loudly—in shrieks—if I could say I was unhappy; but every night I look out of my window before going to bed and see the long falls of the infant river through the meadow, and the dark woods seeming to enclose the house from harm: I dream of the old inhabitant, his ancestors, and the numbers and numbers of springs when the wildflowers have flourished in those woods and the nightingales have sung there. And I feel there will never be a home to me like Dayton.

CHAPTER V

He

For twenty years of my life I have embraced the phantom of the fairest woman that ever drew breath. I have submitted to her whims, I have worshipped her feet, I have, I believe, strengthened her principle. I have done all in my devotion but adopt her religious faith. And I have, as I trusted some time since, awakened to perceive that those twenty years were a period of mere sentimental pastime, perfectly useless, fruitless, unless, as is possible, it has saved me from other follies. But it was a folly in itself. Can one's nature be too steadfast? The question whether a

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spice of frivolousness may not be a safeguard has often risen before me. The truth, I must learn to think, is, that my mental power is not the match for my ideal or sentimental apprehension and native tenacity of attachment. I have fallen into one of the pits of a well-meaning but idle man. The world discredits the existence of pure platonism in love. I myself can barely look back on those twenty years of amatory servility with a full comprehension of the part I have been playing in them. And yet I would not willingly forfeit the exalted admiration of Louise for my constancy: as little willingly as I would have imperilled her purity. I cling to the past as to something in which I have deserved well, though I am scarcely satisfied with it. According to our English notions I know my name. English notions, however, are not to be accepted in all matters, any more than the flat declaration of a fact will develop it in all its bearings. When our English society shall have advanced to a high civilization, it will be less expansive in denouncing the higher stupidities. Among us, much of the social judgement of Hodge upon the relations of men to women is the stereotyped opinion of the land. There is the dictum here for a man who adores a woman who is possessed by a husband. If he has long adored her, and known himself to be preferred by her in innocence of heart; if he has solved the problem of being her bosom's lord, without basely seeking to degrade her to being his mistress; the epithets to characterise him in our vernacular will probably be all the less flattering. Politically we are the most self-conscious people upon earth, and socially the frankest animals. The terrorism of our social

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laws is eminently serviceable, for without it such frank animals as we are might run into bad excesses. I judge rather by the abstract evidence than by the examples our fair matrons give to astounded foreigners when abroad.

Louise writes that her husband is paralysed. The Marquis de Mazardouin is at last tasting of his mortality. I bear in mind the day when he married her. She says that he has taken to priestly counsel, and, like a woman, she praises him for that. It is the one thing which I have not done to please her. She anticipates his decease. Should she be free—what then? My heart does not beat the faster for the thought. There are twenty years upon it, and they make a great load. But I have a desire that she should come over to us. The old folly might rescue me from the new one. Not that I am any further persecuted by the dread that I am in imminent danger here. I have established a proper mastery over my young lady. *Nous avons changé de rôle*. Alice is subdued; she laughs feebly, is becoming conscious—a fact to be regretted, if I desired to check the creature's growth. There is vast capacity in the girl. She has plainly not centred her affections upon Charles, so that a man's conscience might be at ease if—if he chose to disregard what is due to decency. But, why, when I contest it, do I bow to the world's opinion concerning disparity of years between husband and wife? I know innumerable cases of an old husband making a young wife happy. My friend, Dr. Galliot, married his ward, and he had the best wife of any man of my acquaintance. She has been publishing his learned manuscripts ever since his death. That is an extreme case, for he was forty-

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five years her senior, and stood bald at the altar. Old General Althorpe married Julia Dahoop, and, but for his preposterous jealousy of her, might be cited in proof that the ordinary reckonings are not to be a yoke on the neck of one who earnestly seeks to spouse a fitting mate, though late in life. But, what are fifty years? They mark the prime of a healthy man's existence. He has by that time seen the world, can decide, and settle, and is virtually more eligible—to use the cant phrase of gossips—than a young man, even for a young girl. And may not some fair and fresh reward be justly claimed as the crown of a virtuous career?

I say all this, yet my real feeling is as if I were bald as Dr. Galliot and jealous as General Althorpe. For, with my thorough knowledge of myself, I, were I like either one of them, should not have offered myself to the mercy of a young woman, or of the world. Nor, as I am and know myself to be, would I offer myself to the mercy of Alice Amble. When my *filleule* first drove into Dayton she had some singularly audacious ideas of her own. Those vivid young feminine perceptions and untamed imaginations are desperate things to encounter. There is nothing beyond their reach. Our safety from them lies in the fact that they are always seeing too much, and imagining too wildly; so that, with a little help from us, they may be taught to distrust themselves; and when they have once distrusted themselves, we need not afterwards fear them: their supernatural vitality has vanished. I fancy my pretty Alice to be in this state now. She leaves us to-morrow. In the autumn we shall have her with us again, and Louise will scan her com-

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passionately. I desire that they should meet. It will be hardly fair to the English girl, but, if I stand in the gap between them, I shall summon up no small quantity of dormant compatriotic feeling. The contemplation of the contrast, too, may save me from both: like the logic ass with the two trusses of hay on either side of him.

CHAPTER VI

She

I am at home. There was never anybody who felt so strange in her home. It is not a month since I left my sisters, and I hardly remember that I know them. They all, and even papa, appear to be thinking about such petty things. They complain that I tell them nothing. What have I to tell? My Prince! my own Leboo, if I might lie in the stall with you, *then* I should feel thoroughly happy! That is, if I could fall asleep. Evelina declares we are not eight miles from Dayton. It seems to me I am eight millions of miles distant, and shall be all my life travelling along a weary road to get there again—just for one long sunny day. And it might rain when I got there after all! My trouble nobody knows. Nobody knows a thing!

The night before my departure, Miss Pollingray did me the honour to accompany me up to my bedroom. She spoke to me searchingly about Charles; but she did not demand compromising answers. She is not in favour of early marriages, so she merely wishes to know the footing upon which we stand: that of friends. I assured her we were simply friends. 'It is the

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firmest basis of an attachment,' she said; and I did not look hurried.

But I gained my end. I led her to talk of the beautiful Marquise. This is the tale. Mr. Pollingray, when a very young man, and comparatively poor, went over to France with good introductions, and there saw and fell in love with Louise de Riverolles. She reciprocated his passion. If he would have consented to abjure his religion and worship with her, Madame de Riverolles, her mother, would have listened to her entreaties. But Gilbert was firm. Mr. Pollingray, I mean, refused to abandon his faith. Her mother, consequently, did not interfere, and Monsieur de Riverolles, her father, gave her to the Marquis de Marzardouin, a roué young nobleman, immensely rich, and shockingly dissipated. And she married him. No, I cannot understand French girls. Do as I will, it is quite incomprehensible to me how Louise, loving another, could suffer herself to be decked out in bridal finery and go to the altar and take the marriage oaths. Not if perdition had threatened would I have submitted. I have a feeling that Mr. Pollingray should have shown at least one year's resentment at such conduct; and yet I admire him for his immediate generous forgiveness of her. It was fatherly. She was married at sixteen. His forgiveness was the fruit of his few years' seniority, said Miss Pollingray, whose opinion of the Marquise I cannot arrive at. At any rate, they have been true and warm friends ever since, constantly together interchangeing visits. That is why Mr. Pollingray has been more French than English for those long years.

Miss Pollingray concluded by asking me what I thought of the story. I said: 'It is very strange . . .

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French habits are so different from ours. I dare say . . . I hope . . . perhaps . . . indeed, Mr. Pollingray seems happy now.' Her idea of my wits must be that they are of the schoolgirl order—a perfect receptacle for indefinite impressions.

'Ah!' said she. 'Gilbert has burnt his heart to ashes by this time.'

I slept with that sentence in my brain. In the morning, I rose and dressed, dreaming. As I was turning the handle of my door to go down to breakfast, suddenly I swung round in a fit of tears. It was so piteous to think that he should have waited by her twenty years in a slow anguish, his heart burning out, without a reproach or a complaint. I saw him, I still see him, like a martyr.

'Some people,' Miss Pollingray said, 'permitted themselves to think evil of my brother's assiduous devotion to a married woman. There is not a spot on his character, or on that of the person whom Gilbert loved.'

I would believe it in the teeth of calumny. I would cling to my belief in him if I were drowning.

I consider that those twenty years are just nothing, if he chooses to have them so. He has lived embalmed in a saintly affection. No wonder he considers himself still youthful. He is entitled to feel that his future is before him.

No amount of sponging would get the stains away from my horrid red eyelids. I slunk into my seat at the breakfast-table, not knowing that one of the maids had dropped a letter from Charles into my hand, and that I had opened it and was holding it open. The letter, as I found afterwards, told me that Charles has

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received an order from his uncle to go over to Mr. Pollingray's estate in Dauphiny on business. I am not sorry that they should have supposed I was silly enough to cry at the thought of Charles's crossing the Channel. They did imagine it, I know; for by and by Miss Pollingray whispered: 'Les absents n'auront pas tort, cette fois, n'est-ce pas?' And Mr. Pollingray was cruelly gentle: an air of 'I would not intrude on such emotions'; and I heightened their delusions as much as I could: there was no other way of accounting for my pantomime face. Why should he fancy I suffered so terribly? He talked with an excited cheerfulness meant to relieve me, of course, but there was no justification for his deeming me a love-sick kind of woe-begone ballad girl. It caused him likewise to adopt a manner—what to call it, I cannot think: tender respect, frigid regard, anything that accompanies and belongs to the pressure of your hand with the finger-tips. He said goodbye so tenderly that I would have kissed his sleeve. The effort to restrain myself made me like an icicle. Oh! adieu, mon parrain!

INTRODUCTIONS

INTRODUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS OF LADY DUFF GORDON¹

The letters of Lady Duff Gordon are an introduction to her in person. She wrote as she talked, and that is not always the note of private correspondence, the pen being such an official instrument. Readers growing familiar with her voice will soon have assurance that, addressing the public, she would not have blotted a passage or affected a tone for the applause of all Europe. Yet she could own to a liking for flattery, and say of the consequent vanity, that an insensibility to it is inhuman. Her humour was a mouthpiece of nature. She inherited from her father the judicial mind, and her fine conscience brought it to bear on herself as well as on the world, so that she would ask 'Are we so much better?' when someone supremely erratic was dangled before the popular eye. She had not studied her Goethe to no purpose. Nor did the very ridiculous creature who is commonly the outcast of all compassion miss having the tolerant word from her, however much she might be of necessity in the laugh, for Molière also was of her repertory. Hers was the charity which is perceptive and embracing: we may feel certain that she was never a dupe

¹ Introduction: 'Lady Duff Gordon's Letters from Egypt.' Published by Mr. Brimley Johnston. 1902.

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of the poor souls, Christian and Muslim, whose tales of simple misery or injustice moved her to friendly service. Egyptians, *consule Junio* would have met the human interpreter in her, for a picture to set beside that of the vexed Satirist. She saw clearly into the later Nile products, though her view of them was affectionate; but had they been exponents of original sin, her charitableness would have found the philosophical word on their behalf, for the reason that they were not in the place of vantage. The service she did to them was a greater service done to her country, by giving these quivering creatures of the baked land proof that a Christian Englishwoman could be companionable, tender, beneficently motherly with them, despite the reputed insurmountable barriers of alien race and religion. Sympathy was quick in her breast for all the diverse victims of mischance; a shade of it, that was not indulgence but knowledge of the roots of evil, for malefactors and for the fool. Against the cruelty of despotic rulers and the harshness of society she was openly at war, at a time when championship of the lonely or the fallen was not common. Still in this, as in everything controversial, it was the way with her. That singular union of the balanced intellect with the lively heart arrested even in advocacy the floods pressing for pathos. Her aim was at practical measures of help; she doubted the uses of sentimentality in moving tyrants or multitudes to do the thing needed. Moreover, she distrusted eloquence, Parliamentary, forensic, literary; thinking that the plain facts are the most persuasive speakers in a good cause, and that rhetoric is to be suspected as the

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flourish over a weak one. Does it soften the obdurate, kindle the tardily inflammable? Only for a day, and only in cases of extreme urgency, is an appeal to emotion of value for the gain of a day. Thus it was that she never forced her voice, though her feelings might be at heat and she possessed the literary art.

She writes from her home on the Upper Nile: 'In this country one gets to see how much more beautiful a perfectly natural expression is than any degree of the mystical expression of the best painters.' It is by her banishing of literary colouring matter that she brings the Arab and Copt home to us as none other has done, by her unlaboured pleading that she touches to the heart. She was not one to 'spread gold-leaf over her acquaintances and make them shine,' as Horace Walpole says of Madame de Sévigné; they would have been set shining from within, perhaps with a mild lustre, sensibly to the observant, more credibly of the garden sort. Her dislike of superlatives, when the marked effect had to be produced, and it was not the literary performance she could relish as well as any of us, renders hard the task of portraying a woman whose character calls them forth. To him knowing her they would not fit; her individuality passes between epithets. The reading of a sentence of panegyric (commonly a thing of extension) deadened her countenance, if it failed to quicken the corners of her lips; the distended truth in it exhibited the comic shadow on the wall behind. That haunting demon of human eulogy is quashed by the manner adopted from instinct and training. Of her it was known to all intimate with her that she could not speak falsely

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in praise, nor unkindly in depreciation, however much the constant play of her humour might tempt her to exalt or diminish beyond the bounds. But when for the dispersion of nonsense about men or things, and daintiness held up the veil against rational eyesight, the *gros mot* was demanded, she could utter it, as from the Bench, with the like authority and composure.

In her youth she was radiantly beautiful, with dark brows on a brilliant complexion, the head of a Roman man, and features of Grecian line, save for the classic Greek wall of the nose off the forehead. Women, not enthusiasts, inclined rather to criticize, and to criticize so independent a member of their sex particularly, have said that her entry into a ballroom took the breath. Poetical comparisons run under heavy weight in prose, but it would seem in truth, from the reports of her, that whenever she appeared she could be likened to a Selene breaking through cloud; and further, the splendid vessel was richly freighted. Trained by a scholar, much in the society of scholarly men, having an innate bent to exactitude, and with a ready tongue docile to the curb, she stepped into the world armed to be a match for it. She cut her way through the accustomed troops of adorers, like what you will that is buoyant and swims gallantly. Her quality of the philosophical humour carried her easily over the shoals or the deeps in the way of a woman claiming her right to an independent judgement upon the minor rules of conduct, as well as upon matters of the mind. An illustrious foreigner, en tête-à-tête with her over some abstract theme, drops abruptly on a knee to protest, overpowered; and in that

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posture he is patted on the head, while the subject of conversation is continued by the benevolent lady, until the form of ointment she administers for his beseeching expression and his pain compels him to rise and resume his allotted part with a mouth of acknowledging laughter. Humour, as a beautiful woman's defensive weapon, is probably the best that can be called in aid for the bringing of suppliant men to their senses. And so manageable are they when the idea of comedy and the chord of chivalry are made to vibrate, that they (supposing them of the impressionable race which is overpowered by Aphrodite's favourites) will be withdrawn from their great aims, and transformed into happy crust-munching devotees—in other words, fast friends. Lady Duff Gordon had many, and the truest and of all lands. She had, on the other hand, her number of detractors, whom she excused. What woman is without them, if she offends the convention, is a step in advance of her day, and, in this instance, never hesitates upon the needed occasion to dub things with their right names. She could appreciate their disapproval of her in giving herself the airs of a man, pronouncing verdicts on affairs in the style of a man, preferring associating with men. So it was; and besides she smoked. Her physician had hinted at a soothing for an irritated throat that might come of some whiffs of tobacco. She tried a cigar and liked it, and smoked from that day, in her library chair and on horseback. When she saw no harm in an act, opinion had no greater effect on her than summer flies on one with a fan. The country people, sorely tried by the spectacle at first, remembered the gentle deeds and

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homely chat of an eccentric lady and pardoned her, who was often to be seen discoursing familiarly with the tramp on the road, incapable of denying her house-door to the lost dog attached by some instinct to her heels. In the circles named 'upper' there was mention of women unsexing themselves. She preferred the society of men, on the plain ground that they discuss matters of weight, and are—the pick of them—of open speech, more liberal, more genial, better comrades. Was it wonderful to hear them, knowing her as they did, unite in calling her *cœur d'or*? And women could say it of her, for the reasons known to women. Her intimate friendships were with women as with men. The closest friend of this most manfully-minded of women was one of her sex, little resembling her except in downright truthfulness, lovingness, and heroic fortitude.

The hospitable house at Esher gave its welcome not merely to men and women of distinction; the humble undistinguished were made joyous guests there, whether commonplace or counting among the hopeful. Their hostess knew how to shelter the sensitively silent at table, if they were unable to take encouragement and join the flow. Their faces at least responded to her bright look on one or the other of them when something worthy of memory sparkled flying. She had the laugh that rocks the frame, but it was usually with a triumphant smile that she greeted things good to the ear; and her own manner of telling was concise, on the lines of the running subject, to carry it along, not to produce an effect—which is like the horrid gap in air after a blast of powder. Quotation came when it sprang to the lips

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and was native. She was shrewd and cogent, invariably calm in argument, sitting over it, not making a duel, as the argumentative are prone to do; and a strong point scored against her received the honours due to a noble enemy. No pose as mistress of a salon shuffling the guests marked her treatment of them; she was their comrade, one of the pack. This can be the case only when a governing lady is at all points their equal, more than a player of trump cards. In England, in her day, while health was with her, there was one house where men and women conversed. When that house perforce was closed, a light had gone out in our country.

The fatal brilliancy of skin indicated the fell disease which ultimately drove her into exile, to die in exile. Lucie Duff Gordon was of the order of women of whom a man of many years may say that their like is to be met but once or twice in a lifetime.

INTRODUCTION TO W. M. THACKERAY'S 'THE FOUR GEORGES' ¹

William Makepeace Thackeray was born at Calcutta, July 18, 1811, the only child of Richmond and Anne Thackeray. He received the main part of his education at the Charterhouse, as we know to our profit. Thence he passed to Cambridge, remaining there from February 1829 to sometime in 1830. To judge by quotations and allusions, his favourite of the classics was Horace, the chosen of the eighteenth century, and generally the voice of its philosophy in a prosperous country. His voyage from India gave him sight of Napoleon on the rocky island. In his young manhood he made his bow reverentially to Goethe of Weimar; which did not check his hand from setting its mark on the sickliness of Werther.

He was built of an extremely impressionable nature and a commanding good sense. He was in addition a calm observer, having 'the harvest of a quiet eye.' Of this combination with the flood of subjects brought up to judgement in his mind, came the prevalent humour, the enforced disposition to satire, the singular critical drollery, notable in his works. His parodies, even those pushed to burlesque, are an expression of criticism and are more effective than the serious method, while they rarely overstep the line of just-

¹ Introduction to 'The Four Georges,' in the Red Letter Library. By courtesy of Messrs. Blackie and Sons.

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ness. The 'Novels by Eminent Hands' do not pervert the originals they exaggerate. 'Sieyes an abbé, now a ferocious lifeguardsman,' stretches the face of the rollicking Irish novelist without disfiguring him; and the mysterious visitor to the palatial mansion in Holywell Street indicates possibilities in the Oriental imagination of the eminent statesman who stooped to conquer fact through fiction. Thackeray's attitude in his great novels is that of the composedly urbane lecturer, on a level with a select audience, assured of interesting, above requirements to excite. The slow movement of the narrative has a grace of style to charm like the dance of the Minuet de la Cour: it is the limpidity of Addison flavoured with salt of a racy vernacular; and such is the veri-similitude and the dialogue that they might seem to be heard from the mouths of living speakers. When in this way the characters of 'Vanity Fair' had come to growth, their author was rightly appreciated as one of the creators in our literature, he took at once the place he will retain. With this great book and with 'Esmond' and 'The Newcomes' he gave a name eminent, singular, and beloved to English fiction.

Charges of cynicism are common against all satirists, Thackeray had to bear with them. The social world he looked at did not show him heroes, only here and there a plain good soul to whom he was affectionate in the unhysterical way of an English father patting a son on the head. He described his world as an accurate observer saw it, he could not be dishonest. Not a page of his books reveals malevolence or a sneer at humanity. He was driven to the satirical task by the scenes about him. There must be the

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moralist in the satirist if satire is to strike. The stroke is weakened and art violated when he comes to the front. But he will always be pressing forward, and Thackeray restrained him as much as could be done, in the manner of a good-humoured constable. Thackeray may have appeared cynical to the devout by keeping him from a station in the pulpit among congregations of the many convicted sinners. That the moralist would have occupied it and thundered had he presented us with the Fourth of the Georges we see when we read of his rejecting the solicitations of so seductive a personage for the satiric rod.

Himself one of the manliest, the kindest of human creatures, it was the love of his art that exposed him to misinterpretation. He did stout service in his day. If the bad manners he scourged are now lessened to some degree we pay a debt in remembering that we owe much to him, and if what appears incurable remains with us, a continued reading of his works will at least help to combat it.

INTRODUCTION TO 'THE JAPANESE SPIRIT' ¹

We have had illuminating books upon Japan. Those of Lafcadio Hearn will always be remembered for the poetry he brought in them to bear upon the poetic aspects of the country and the people. Buddhism had a fascination for him, as it had for Mr. Fielding in his remarkable book on the practice of this religion in Burma. There is also the work of Captain Brinkley, to which we are largely indebted.

These lectures by a son of the land, delivered at the University of London, are compendious and explicit in a degree that enables us to form a summary of much that has been otherwise partially obscure, so that we get nearer to the secret of this singular race than we have had the chance of doing before. He traces the course of Confucianism, Laoism, Shintoism, in the instruction it has given to his countrymen for the practice of virtue, as to which Lao-tze informs us with a piece of 'Chinese metaphysics' that can be had without having recourse to the dictionary: 'Superior virtue is non-virtue. Therefore it has virtue. Inferior virtue never loses sight of virtue. Therefore it has no virtue. Superior virtue is non-assertive and without pretension. Inferior virtue asserts and makes pretensions.' It is childish

¹ Introduction to 'The Japanese Spirit.' By G. Okakura. By the courtesy of Messrs. Constable and Company.

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subtle and easy to be understood of a young people in whose minds Buddhism and Shintoism formed a part.

The Japanese have had the advantage of possessing a native nobility who were true nobles, not invaders and subjugators. They were, in the highest sense, men of honour, before the time of this dreadful war. Hara-kiri was an imperative resource, under the smallest suspicion of disgrace. How rigidly they understood and practised virtue, in the sense above cited, is exemplified in the way they renounced their privileges for the sake of the commonweal when the gates of Japan were thrown open to the West.

Bushido, or the 'way of the Samurai,' has become almost an English word, so greatly has it impressed us with the principle of renunciation on behalf of the country's welfare. This splendid conception of duty has been displayed again and again at Port Arthur and on the fields of Manchuria, not only by the Samurai, but by a glorious commonalty imbued with the spirit of their chiefs.

All this is shown clearly by Professor Okakura in this valuable book.

It proves to general comprehension that such a people must be unconquerable even if temporarily defeated; and that is not the present prospect of things. Who could conquer a race of forty millions having the contempt of death when their country's inviolability is at stake! Death, moreover, is despised by them because they do not believe in it. 'The departed, although invisible, are thought to be leading their ethereal life in the same world, in much the same state as that to which they had been accustomed

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while on earth.’ And so, ‘when the father of a Japanese family begins a journey of any length, the raised part of his room will be made sacred to his memory during his temporary absence; his family will gather in front of it and think of him, expressing their devotion and love in words and gifts in kind.’ In the hundreds of thousands of families that have some one or other of their members fighting for the nation in this dreadful war, there will not be even one solitary house where the mother, wife, or sister is not practising this simple rite of endearment for the beloved and absent member of the family. Spartans in the fight, Stoics in their grief.

Concerning the foolish talk of the Yellow Peril, a studious perusal of this book will show it to be fatuous. It is at least unlikely in an extreme degree that such a people, reckless of life though they be in front of danger, but Epicurean in their wholesome love of pleasure and pursuit of beauty, will be inflated to insanity by the success of their arms. Those writers who have seen something malignant and inimical behind their gracious politeness, have been mere visitors on the fringe of the land, alarmed by their skill in manufacturing weapons and explosives—for they are inventive as well as imitative, a people not to be trifled with; but this was because their instinct as well as their emissaries warned them of a pressing need for the means of war. Japan and China have had experience of Western nations, and that is at the conscience of suspicious minds.

It may be foreseen that when the end has come, the Kaiser, always honourably eager for the influence of his people, will draw a glove over the historic

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‘Mailed Fist,’ and offer it to them frankly. It will surely be accepted, and that of France, we may hope; Russia as well. England is her ally—to remain so, we trust; America is her friend. She has, in fact, won the admiration of Friend and Foe alike.

INTRODUCTION TO A VOLUME OF THE POEMS OF DORA SIGERSON SHORTER¹

An Introduction to a book wears the sad aspect of an advocate addressing a frigid jury. The foreword should be an afterword, and find its place in an appendix if anywhere. When we have an Introduction to a volume of poems, reviewers, even modern reviewers, might take it as a plea in apology or for favour. But modern reviewers are more indulgent. How great the difference between them and those of the old order is brought to my mind by a criticism in an aged quarterly Review (not the 'Quarterly' nor the 'Edinburgh,' though they had their merits) of Coleridge's 'Christabel,' in which there was the quotation:—

'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.'

Upon this was the comment 'Why could not Mr. Coleridge tell us plainly that it was the month of April?' We are in a clearer atmosphere at present as to reviewers, whatever may be said of the poets. Nevertheless an Irish woman, writing from her heart of the legends of her country and the superstitions of the peasantry, may have her way smoothed in advance by some contribution of the Celtic mind. And she writes ballads too, which are rather in disfavour now.

¹ Introduction to 'The Collected Poems of Dora Sigerson Shorter.' London, 1907. By the courtesy of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton.

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The mind of the Celt has been much discussed. It is generally taken to be overpoweringly emotional, vapourised as well, and fantastical, remote, divorced from reality. Such is the impression of it on the Saxon mind. But reality has more than one way of speaking. The rightly poetic is only another language for the flat prose. Thus a fair young cousin loves a gallant lord and he gives her a kiss on the cheek as he rides away, caring but for the chase. She vows in her heart that he shall have his wish: she swallows a potion. Red Richard sees a white doe ahead of him, and pursues her; she has the dark eyes of his cousin; day after day she flits before the exasperated hunter until at last his spear transfixes her. Returning home he finds the corpse of his cousin, his spear buried in her breast. Prose would put it that Red Richard, preferring the chase, like Adonis, was teased by his fair cousin's affection, and ultimately caused her death by his cruelty. Facts work on the Celtic mind in its imaginative exercise like the flame of a lamp crossing the eyelids of a sleeper. Symbolism swallows Reality, but Reality is read through it, if we take the trouble.

A false rhyme may be found in this poet's ballads. There has been of late a cry for the more rigid enforcement of rhyme; strange to hear when the many writers of verse are wearing the poor stock we have to shreds. That hard consonated smack on the ear of an exact similarity of sound is required in what is called our heroic verse which relies for its effect on the timely clapper. In lyrics the demand for music is imperative, and rhymes there must be. Unhappily the monosyllables chiefly in request are a scanty lot. Attempts to translate Heine and our weakness in

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dissyllables baffles the experiment. An unrivalled instrumentalist like Mr. Swinburne, prince of lyrists, does marvels with the language. Lesser men, however, correct their rhyming, betray the cramp of their hand in frequent repetitions of the rhymes. We can generally anticipate the line as well as the rhyme to come. A ballad, of which the main point is to tell a story metrically, is not bound to strictness in rhyme, for the mind is made more attentive than the ear. Mrs. Dora Sigerson Shorter has the gift of metrical narrative. Her gentle sincerity holds her to the story. Even when her emotions are not roused, the art of compression and progression, as in 'The Dean of Santiago,' is shown. Among the minor pieces 'The Vagrant Heart' will strike an echo in many a woman's breast. Further work, especially ballads, is to be expected from her, Irish or other. Her country supplies one of the richest of fields.

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‘LA MAISON FORESTIÈRE.’¹ Par MM. Erckmann-Chatrian. Paris: Hetzel; London: Williams and Norgate.

A really good *Mährchen* is almost as rare as a good lyric poem, and seems about as difficult a piece of composition for two hands; but MM. Erckmann-Chatrian put the signature of their common authorship to ‘La Maison Forestière,’ and the work is so charming that it is a minor question how it was done. The extraordinary sympathy with which they write together is shown here even more than in ‘Madame Thérèse’ and ‘Le Conscrit,’ and the various tales they have published. One can, perhaps, fancy a new note being struck where their pastoral description ceases and characters are delineated, or the narration is continued; but in ‘La Maison Forestière,’ this slight change of tone would be necessitated by the change of scene, and the simplicity of the style scarcely varies, except towards the close. The strong dramatic pitch is pardonable there, though it takes a leap out of the *Mährchen* proper.

A young Düsseldorf artist is introduced on a pedestrian tour across the Hunsrück chain into the old German forest-land of the *bunter Sandstein*, where you find old castles enough, and wooded lakes, and

¹ ‘Fortnightly Review,’ January 1867, New Series, vol. i., p. 126.

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legends, and a faithful belief in them. The sylvan sketches are given with the minuteness which Jean Jacques spread the taste for in French literature, and Saint-Pierre, and subsequently Madame Sand, dropping apostrophes, made an element of their fictions. An old forest-keeper, Franz Honeck, who has served in his youth under the Great Emperor, like most of MM. Erckmann-Chatrian's characters, gives the traveller entertainment in his hut, 'La Maison Forestière,' where he lives with his two grandchildren, Loïse and Kaspar, and he does not object to have his portrait painted in return for it. You expect the sentimental son of Düsseldorf to fall in love with the pretty Loïse. He is moving fast in that direction, when one morning he is awakened by a wild howling of the dogs, lowing of the cattle, neighing of the goats. The old wolf of the Veierschloss is leading its whelps around Franz Honeck's forest hut. What soul inhabits the unappeasable brute? Is it that of Vittikâb, the last of the Burckars, who set flames to the Veierschloss and scattered its ashes on his perished race? Or is it that of Zaphéri Honeck, Vittikâb's chief huntsman, who followed his master when the Burckar lighted Landau with devouring fire and tossed the babes and children into it, and was cursed by an aged peasant holding his grandchild up in the midst of the fire? It may be Zaphéri's soul or Vittikâb's. Once a year the old wolf and its whelps circle the hut, and Loïse falls in a trance. Zaphéri was Franz Honeck's seventh or eighth ancestor. Franz is ashamed of him; but though a grievous sinner, Zaphéri died repentant, and a descendant should rather pity him. He and Vittikâb hunted the beasts, and pillaged the

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castles, and ravaged the land, like destroying torches. But their end was different, and the tale runs thus. The Burckar—called the *Comte Sauvage*, for the hunter of beasts was half a beast in aspect as well as in character, being hairy and of immense length of arm—had a child by his first wife, a creature upon which he looked as on a thing sent to him from hell, and nothing but the agony of the mother kept him from dashing this disgrace of his blood to atoms. The huntsmen, whippers, and troopers of the Veierschloss assembled in the castle-court to salute the new Burckar who was to perpetuate the race of the ancient Suabian kings, heard Vittikâb cry over the balustrade that the new Burckar was dead, and so it was believed in the castle, for the ceremony of the burial followed at night; but Vittikâb's frightful offspring has been handed over to old Goetz, a famous huntsman; and Goetz lives with him, and rears him, locked up in a tower at one end of the Veierschloss, where Hatvine, an old woman, alone in the secret, brings food for the pair of prisoners. For twenty years after the death of Hâsoum, the monster's mother, Vittikâb carouses like one who satisfies a rage, until one day his arm fails him, and he is worsted. This causes him to reflect on the possible extinction of the Burckar line. Soon after, there are grand preparations for a marriage festival at the Veierschloss. Old Goetz in his tower hears sounds of singing and of hammers, and sees lights up the castle-walls at night. Twenty years of captivity with Hâsoum have taught him to love the creature, and be blind to his hideousness. It is imperative that Hâsoum should die. Vittikâb takes one fortifying glance at him while he lies asleep in

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the upper chamber of the tower, and then he gives the order to Goetz. Who shall say what prayers for Hâsoum's life and talk of his gentleness old Goetz addressed to Vittikâb's impatient ears? You can imagine that Vittikâb did not quit him without exacting his oath to obey. Goetz went up to Hâsoum, and looked at him asleep, and at the bars and beams whereon Hâsoum swung when awake, and at the lake-water beyond the woods, the narrow boundary of Hâsoum's life, all of which knocked pitifully at the old man's heart; and he thought, 'Since he has feet to run with, why should he not run?' Master Zaphéri Honeck meantime has the chief burden of the entertainment resting upon his shoulders; for, above all, the day of Vittikâb's nuptials must be celebrated by a mighty chase. Presently comes Kaspar Rebock, the keen huntsman, to Zaphéri and exhibits to him mysteriously a track, imprinted on a handful of mossy turf, that is a track of no beast known. Zaphéri inspects the track with gathering astonishment. He ruminates on it, discovers that the new beast must be swift, and shy, and powerful, and that it does not fear fire, and is altogether such a beast as his lord Vittikâb would love to follow and to slay. He promises Vittikâb that he shall have the mightiest hunt ever known to a chief of the Burckar line. Vittikâb, possessed with a passionate eagerness to be out and off after this miracle of venery, receives his bride and the guests, and heads them into the forest—burgraves, landgraves, markgraves, counts, barons and squires, huntsmen and the incomparable Burckar dogs, a cross of sheep-dog, wolf, and blood-hound, who never abandoned a track or were baffled.

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The dogs are soon upon the scent, and fill the valleys with the petulant fury of their cries. Over shoulders of hills, across green dells, now towards the plains, back to the forest recesses, in and out, streams the hunting cavalcade like a coloured smoke, on the wonderful winding tracks of this amazing new beast. The horn of Vittikâb, far in advance, is heard, and the great hunter is seen urging his horse, transfigured with a madness of glee at having at last found a quarry worthy of his redoubtable dogs and himself. Zaphéri Honeck watches all from the summit of a bald rock. Joined by the hunter Kaspar Rebock, he makes for a height above one of the gorges of the hills, known as the gorge *du Pot-de-Fer*, where a wall of iron-black rock, scooped at its base in the form of a huge pot, rising sheer up, shuts the way—a place where an old fox never enters twice. Before they have torn aside the thick holly-branches to peer below, the dogs are at battle with the beast; and amid the uproar of an infernal pit, the two men behold, upon a coigne of the rock, a figure astonishingly tall, with a human head, wolf's ears, a hairy skin, claws of a bear, and a crine of yellow locks tossing from his neck. This figure wields an enormous oak-branch, wherewith he smites down the bloody frothing muzzles of the Burckar dogs as they take long fifteen-feet leaps, howling from the points of rock to get at him, and dangling shattered paws with red jaws plaintive to the sky. Bats and owls and night-birds dart from their nooks, and mount over the gnashing pit in clouds, till the sunlight strikes them and they descend to their troubled hollows. And now the horn of Vittikâb rings through the tumult.

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Honeck and Rebock hear the sharp gallow of his horse. The bellow of the horn stops with a terrible blunt roar, as of a life shot dead. The two men see their master in the turn of the gorge, white as a spectre, his eyeballs starting out, horror on his face. Horse and rider are as if blown backward. At that instant the unhappy creature fighting the dogs gives a cry of distress, like an appeal for help to one whom he has recognised, but help is too late, and he has fallen into the mass of ravening jaws. Vittikâb springs among them, shouts his son's name, 'Hâsoum! Hâsoum!' Never has a Burckar fought with so splendid a courage as this Hâsoum, the last of the race. The father's entrails are torn with love for him. Dashed with the blood and brains of the dogs, he catches up his son's body by the thick yellow locks, finds him dead indeed, lays him, with one groan, on the saddle, and gallops madly for the Veierschloss.

This is a faint sketch of a piece of vigorous writing that does not outstep the sober tone of a *Mährchen*. How Vittikâb throws his son's body on the board spread for feasting, and speaks the 'moral' in the presence of the marriage-guests, and praises the old man Goetz, who had cast the poor youth out upon Providence rather than do a deed of murder, may be read in 'La Maison Forestière.' It forms the climax explanatory, and will, I suppose, give greater satisfaction than if the emotions of the reader had not received assistance and directions.

‘TRAINING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE.’¹ By
Archibald Maclaren. London: Macmillan and
Co., 1867.

There is no higher authority on the science of Training than Mr. Maclaren of Oxford. He writes from close observation and long experience; and even they who have brought themselves to think that the honour of the country is involved in maintaining our present picturesque speed in boat-racing, must admit that what is said by a man so thoroughly accomplished to instruct carries weight. The general aim of his book includes a special application. He treats of training with reference to rowing; and he emphatically condemns the present system of rowing—and to some extent, of training for—boat-races. If his book shall provoke controversy he will probably be all the better pleased, for it is evident that, in publishing it, he has attempted a public service. He is, however, less likely to be answered than evaded. When ladies and other exoteric spectators behold the two University eights apparently straining every muscle of their frames on the broad reach between Putney and Hammersmith, they would be incredulous of any grave professor who should tell them that what they looked on was labour indeed, but a low form of exercise; and that the men running and shouting on the banks were undergoing

¹ ‘Fortnightly Review,’ March 1867, New Series, vol. i., p. 380.

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greater muscular exertion than the desperately-pulling crews. An appeal to the latter at the termination of the race would restore popular confidence in the supremacy of rowing in thin outriggers as an exercise. Victorious or defeated, the oarsmen believe that they have put out every fibre of their strength, and whether they look distressed, as the reporters say, or row the course back again chirping, they are not likely to be persuaded that they have excelled the runners on the banks only in breathing hard, bending quick, and going swift. The sensations of the frame after a rapid expenditure of energy always justify the idea that great muscular exertion has been taken. Mr. Maclaren distinctly denies it to be the case in rowing. He is as uncompromising as a German philologer, or an English imitator of one, who strikes at the established classical tenets of faith of the comfortable scholars. Rowing, he says, has undoubtedly advanced as an *art*, and has become degraded as an *exercise*. 'It is the circumscribing of the line of muscular operation, the concentrating of the physical exertion into the narrowest channel, that has brought rowing to its present point of artistic excellence—which gives to the rower that statuesque appearance when resting on his oar, and that automatic precision of movement when in action, which constitute the very ideal of an oarsman and of a crew. The part of the body which receives the smallest share of the exercise in rowing is the chest; it has little or no employment in the muscular effort required for the propulsion of the boat; and this is impressively evident in the results. Not only does it make no advance in development in this exercise, but if it be exclusively practised, an absolutely depressing

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effect is experienced.’ The chest *lingers*, the muscles not generally called upon lose their condition. For rowing of all kinds the exertion required is confined to a few particular muscles; but for the propulsion of a modern racing-boat, the arms and the chest are scarcely exercised at all, in the true sense of the word. The boat is so light that it meets with very little resistance in the water; consequently, as swiftness is the object to be attained, for this purpose a mechanical motion, absolutely unvaried, and ‘wind’ to keep it up, are exclusively the things aimed at by those who train for rowing. Now ‘wind’ in this case means ability to hold the breath for a length of time, and hurry over the act of breathing—both the inspiration and expiration—‘during that time in which the muscles are relaxed; that is, towards the close of the stroke, and on the rapid forward dart of the body, preparatory to another; when the breath is again held, and the chest fixed during the muscular effort,’ to fortify it. This holding of the breath makes the voluntary muscles of the upper region of the trunk firm and resisting. It was part of the gymnastic science among the ancients; the athletes practised it both after severe exertion to refresh the organs, and as a preliminary to strenuous effort. A wrestler instinctively takes a deep inspiration, and holds it when he is about to engage. A man plunging into heavy seas does the same. Physically, the holding of the breath indicates sharp resolution. But it may be easily overdone. The athletes soon became examples of vicious gymnastics. Done moderately it is inspiriting; it will cure a fit of yawning, and, as it fills all the air-vessels, it used to be thought, and is, perhaps, serviceable in cases of lung-disease.

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Nevertheless the ancients understood that it could be hurtful to respiration, and they accused it of producing aneurisms. The daily repetitions of it in rapid 'spurts' under strong excitement, while a part of the frame is not in full corresponding activity, cannot benefit the arterial system; if it is injurious to respiration and circulation, it must be obnoxious to the heart. Yet it is possible to train men so that the respiratory power required by rowing shall increase largely, and help to fit them for their work. A judicious course of running does more than anything else to 'open the chest'; for running does not disturb, but deepens respiration, and is the proper handmaid of rowing. Mr. Maclaren complains that the customary morning run has been discontinued, and on the ground that it 'takes it out of a man'; upon which he remarks: 'In plain and simple truth, the strength of a man and his respiratory capacity also, will be in proportion to what he does take out of himself by exertion. The more rapidly a man wears down the tissues of the body by properly regulated exertion, the greater will be their strength and serviceability, the greater will be their bulk and consistency, the greater the functional capacity in every way in which function can be legitimately performed; because the action of the several systems of the body are so perfectly in accord, that the very process which causes the destruction also accomplishes the reproduction.' Of course, this must be regulated by the individual capacity to repair as quickly as he wastes; Mr. Maclaren is addressing a modern boating eight, who can command the increase of vitality with every increase of natural exertion.

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It is on the subject of dieting that professional trainers are so mysteriously profound in their wisdom, and he is unfortunate who falls into their hands without having some dietetic principles founded on his own experience. They commonly made a clean sweep of all one's previous habits. Few will tolerate eggs, or, if they do, they allow of the yolks only. Some are for beef, some for mutton, some for roast, some for broiled; as a rule they have salt, and sigh with their victim when he craves for beer. A private trainer promises you a hearty innings, by and by when you have finished your task. After that performance you may resume your habit of smoking, and are presumed to have fairly earned your wine; while training, your habits and animal cravings are disregarded — your second nature goes in irons. The restriction in the matter of tobacco is right enough, but Mr. Maclaren says: ‘I hold it to be foreign from the purpose of training, suddenly or greatly to change a man's habits in anything, and especially in such as notably affect the nervous system.’ I find in ‘The Athlete’ for 1866, just published, remarks to the same effect. The chief danger of training consists in the sudden adoption of new dietetic rules, to relinquish them and fall as suddenly back upon old habits when the strain upon physical endurance is over. The charm which is to be found in asceticism caused the imposed privations to seem sternly agreeable; and men who train will deny themselves many harmless things, as friars and fakirs do, in the belief that they are acting virtuously, and are earning the future reward of a plenitude of indulgences. The gradations from and towards our ordinary habits, of which Mr.

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Maclaren speaks, may be rigorously observed, but it is a question whether men who do not live, by comparison, austerely, should ever train at all. The gradations from a friar's crust to alderman's fare will hardly be taken step by step in the face of the temptations besetting the appetite of a 'modern athlete.' Mr. Maclaren is nowhere treasonable to rowing as an art. The philosophical tendency of his book is to prove that any exercise undertaken exclusively is of small advantage to the frame and is done in error, if the true aim of exercise be to develop bodily strength and fitness for all forms of manly work. Rowing, running, boxing, fencing, or hunting, or cricketing will do this, when combined with gymnastics, that is general exercise. But men who go into training merely for one determined object forget the principle. I hope that Mr. Maclaren will be induced to publish a popular book on gymnastics. Directions upon self-training are very much wanted from a trustworthy guide, who is able both to point out the uses of training for the health of the people and the benefit of the state, and to show how a serviceable system of training should be conducted.

REMINISCENCES OF A SEPTUAGENARIAN FROM
1802 TO 1815.¹ By Emma Sophia, Countess
Brownlow. London: Murray.

The high-bred plain manner of the writing of this book makes it pleasurable to read. As a *mémoire pour servir* it is valueless, for it tells nothing that is new. But it revives impressions of famous times and persons, and it may serve for an English model of the class of book, whether containing original matter or not. 'I am now an old woman,' the writer says, 'and having lived in stirring times from my youth, and most of my contemporaries having dropped around me, I am also an old chronicle, with the memories of bygone days still fresh in my mind.' Her earliest recollection is of the period immediately following the great mutiny of the fleet in 1797, when, as a very young child, she observed a procession of boats round the ships in Plymouth Sound, and was told that mutineers were being thus impressively flogged. Hearing that the toast of the men under punishment had been, 'A dark night, a sharp knife, and a bloody blanket,' she went to her bed for many a night in fear and trembling, as well she might. Art could not paint the contrast between those times and these more forcibly. She was too young, or too English to do perfect justice to Madame Récamier's

¹ 'Fortnightly Review,' February 1868, New Series, vol. iiii., p. 229.

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beauty, when she saw her in 1802, walking in Kensington Gardens, dressed in the quasi-classical fashion which the republic had bequeathed to the ladies of the empire. Frenchwomen are never much to her taste. The exclamation, 'What a strange people the French are!' is implied generally, and sometimes expressed, and is as good a reminiscence of our old insular habit of sitting in judgement upon foreigners as could be. Her interview with Alexander in Paris, when he posed *en conquérant militaire* before Lady Castlereagh, puts the pragmatical Czar in an extremely comical light. His pedantic distinction of '*le courage moral, et le courage physique*,' on which he lays severe, though unctuous emphasis, as if to show that he is in possession of both high qualities, coupled with the appearance given him by his padded uniform, 'so tight round the waist and the arm-holes that he could not stand upright, and his arms did not touch his body,' is an effective caricature. Nor does Napoleon escape; but this easy pen cannot relate things ridiculous seen of him. He is merely heard of as flying from an incensed people in the form of a courier, with the round livery-hat, etc. If the writer's eye had been on him when in that garb, he would have figured preposterously enough. Yet he found tolerable favour in her sight at a review of his troops in the Place du Carrousel, before the first Consul had become a fat emperor. 'He was then thin, and his figure appeared to be *mesquin*; but how grand was his face, with its handsome features, its grave, stern, and somewhat melancholy expression! A face, once seen, never to be forgotten. It fascinated and acted on me like a rattlesnake,' etc. The Tories had not then triumphed over him. Full sympathy is given

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to the unfortunate Duchess D'Angoulême. The French ladies, in common with their lords, presumed to be critical of the restored royal family, and remarked on the duchess, '*Elle est maussade, Elle n'a pas de grâce, Elle est mal mise,*' the worst fault in a Frenchwoman's eyes, says the writer, adding that these heartless observations put her out of all patience. But to make a parade of affliction in the presence of such remorseless eyes, after royal personages had come to be tested by their merits in France, was certainly imprudent, and one of various proofs that the Bourbons could not learn. French ladies do not like sorrow to persevere and show itself; and if a superior consents to appear 'cross-grained, ungraceful, and badly dressed,' on the plea of sorrowful antecedents, they will not excuse her for the sin against society. There are times, they think, for all things, and a time for wearing the livery of grief in public. Moreover, there were reasons why the horrors of her days in the Temple should not have been made visible in the aspect of the duchess at that season. The quick-witted observers saw a want of common energy and common policy in the absence of a presentable mask. Unlike us, the French refuse to render hearty allegiance to illustrious personages who cannot control, or who weakly indulge, the exhibition of their emotions. They may be morally wrong, but they imagine themselves to be right, and they have a right to demand that their superiors shall make some effort to conform to their customs. Lady Castlereagh receives a ceremonial visit from the Duchess de Courlande and her daughters, Madame de Lagan and Madame de Périgord, subsequently Duchesse de Dino, a very clever woman—Talleyrand's

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right hand when in London, who saved him from more than one portentous blunder. Madame de Périgord is described as 'dark, with magnificent eyes, highly rouged, and gaily dressed in a pink gown, and roses on her head.' Her mother imparted to her hostess that her daughter is very unhappy—'*elle vient de perdre son enfant*,' which is shocking to our native taste. 'Why she should have thought it necessary to bring her rouge, her pink dress, her roses, and her *tristesse*, to call on Lady Castlereagh, was not obvious, and I doubt whether Lady Castlereagh was properly grateful to these ladies for their visit, for when they were gone, she said, "Emma, I am afraid we live in very bad company." Too true! but we could not help ourselves.' The complacency of the reflection is still characteristic of the English who enjoy and reprobate Paris. Madame de Périgord was simply fulfilling what she conceived to be a public duty. She had to pay a visit, and she did not choose—for it is not the habit of the country—to affect the eyes of others by presenting herself sombrely clad. Frenchwomen are, to say the least, as tender-hearted mothers as Englishwomen. She may have been *bien triste* for the loss of the child in spite of her rouge; nay, coming of a provident race, she may even on that occasion have thought it adviseable to lay on an extra dab of her artificial bloom, not supposing that she violated any laws of decency, but supposing quite the reverse. Why should she wear a suffering heart on her sleeve? Frenchwomen hold our English obtrusion of heavy mourning into society to be an offence, a selfish insistence on a private grief, evincing absolute want of consideration for others; in short, a

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piece of our national bad breeding. They enter society because society comforts them, as it will always comfort the most healthily impressionable natures. They are not of a temper to nurse their grief in secret, and it is a principle of taste with them to decide to abstract attention as black dots, and be out of harmony with the scenes they visit.

La Maréchale Ney does hurt to our English sentiments likewise. A few mornings after the death of Josephine at Malmaison, 'Lady Castlereagh and I called on Madame la Maréchale Ney, and, being admitted, were dismayed at finding her seated on a *canapé* in a recess at the end of the room, a table before her, on which was a flacon and a pocket-handkerchief, and she herself in floods of tears! We felt very awkward, and were inclined to beat a retreat, but Madame la Maréchale did not appear in the least annoyed, and informed us that her grief was caused by the loss of Josephine, who had brought her up, and to whom she was much attached. The grief was all very natural, but not so to our English notions was the somewhat theatrical display of sorrow before two persons almost strangers.' Why not before strangers, when La Maréchale was not suffering from the instant shock, but after an interval of some days, was probably craving to talk of her lost friend, and hear kindly things spoken of Josephine? Which is the more amiable proceeding—to shut oneself up in gloom over a blow of this sort, or to open doors to the world, even unto strangers, assuming that they will bring phrases of sympathy wholesome for grief? It is appended charitably: 'And yet I believe the poor woman was really unhappy,' notwithstanding the

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arrangement of her flacon and pocket-handkerchief within reach to succour two of her more heavily-taxed senses! The Conservative sex in England preserves this habit of regarding Frenchwomen as a curious, too often as a degrading variety of the sex. What, *en revanche*, do Frenchmen say of them? Things not to be summed in '*mal mise*,' '*maussade*,' '*sans grâce*.' Madame de Girardin struck out one character which they take for a type of the average English lady, The irony of a desperate attempt at charity is doubtless a severe weapon on our side; but Frenchwomen are mistresses of the irony of utter scorn. To deserve it would be sad. To provoke it is unwise.

In company with Lady Castlereagh, the Septuagenarian witnessed the first trial of Ney, by court-martial of his brother generals. Her description of him revives our faith in the portraits extant: 'The president was Marshal Jourdan, whose bâton had been taken at the battle of Vittoria, and sent to England.' He sat without his bâton, then:

'On his right sat Masséna, a spare, dark, ill-looking man with only one eye, the other having been shot by Bonaparte in a *chasse*. Besides these were Marshals Augereau, Duc de Castiglione, and Mortier, Duc de Treviso; Generals Comte Villette, Claparède, and Maison, Governor of Paris. . . . With the exception of Mortier, they were certainly not a prepossessing set. When Ney, their former comrade, entered the court and was placed before them, their countenances were pitiable to behold; they cast down their eyes, as if wanting the courage to look him in the face. Ney's manner was calm and simple, which gave him an

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unusual air of dignity. He was a strongly-built man, above the middle height, fair complexioned, with yellow hair and eyebrows, short nose, and long upper lip; nothing distinguished, or even French, about him. In fact, he had much the look of an English yeoman'—with the dignity superadded. It was left to the peers of France to show the accord they were in with the feelings of the people by sending this man, the greatest hero of the empire, the most illustrious name in military chronicles for soldiery, steadfastness, and chivalry and valour, to execution—'to meet' (Countess Brownlow clearly expresses the opinion of high Toryism at that epoch, though it is not so sure that the Duke of Wellington more than submitted to the implacable verdict), 'to meet, and justly too, a traitor's doom.' The death of Ney was a blow to the Bourbons. So it may be deduced by admirers of them that their keen sense of justice was a ground of their destruction. They perished of their virtues.

With the exception of Talleyrand, the chief diplomatists are mentioned with approbation; Pozzo di Borgo being the favourite. He was Russian ambassador at the time when the allies were in occupation of Paris. He was, therefore, on equal terms with the British minister. Is there any truth in a story that Pozzo di Borgo was discovered by Lord Ponsonby in Constantinople, and sent over to our Foreign Office, strongly recommended to the attention of the Government as a young man certain to achieve eminent distinction in any diplomatic service, because of his possession of a peculiar genius in diplomacy, and that the young Corsican presented his letters, and was allowed an interview with a minister, and that he

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some time after received an appointment to a subordinate clerk's post valued at £200 per annum; which act of experimental condescension precipitated Pozzo di Borgo out of this country more speedily than if his lordship's toe had dislodged him, after one brief national ejaculation from the summit of Shakespeare's cliff? The story is told, though it is questionable whether it has been seen in print; and if the story is true, one would like to know who was the British minister, and with what sort of greeting they met in Paris and in London. With something, one can fancy, of the quiet smile interchanged by Frederick the Great and the general he had handed over to the Austrian service to cause him big perplexities, when they met after the wars in which they grew old.

MR. ROBERT LYTTON'S POEMS¹

The task of criticising a collection of the poems of one who has written much without having yet taken a distinct place in our poetic literature is singularly burdensome and thankless. For it will seem ungracious to praise with a reservation; it is always unpleasant to do so; and by subjecting his works to analysis, there is danger of conveying an idea among careless readers that none of them are of compact worth. But it is to a poet in Mr. Lytton's position that criticism, which is too often an impertinence, may really be of service. If his style and manner are not perfectly formed, he may listen to the judgement of a student of his craft; and if he will apprehend that he is not yet out of the fight, though he has won distinction, he will bear taking some rough blows in good humour, perhaps with profit. That he has a steady and a large ambition is shown by the number and by the improving quality of his publications. That he has hitherto failed to create enthusiasm for his poetic gifts must also, I think, be said, notwithstanding his popularity and merit. He has gained the public ear, but he has not gained the entire approval of those by whom enduring fame is given. The attempt to criticise him, therefore, without seeming

¹ 'Chronicles and Characters.' By the Hon. R. Lytton (Lord Lytton—'Owen Meredith.') London: Chapman and Hall, 1867. 'Fortnightly Review,' June 1868, New Series, vol. iii., p. 658.

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to be guilty of what is called carping criticism—in other words, without seeking to discover how it is that he either offended the taste or missed the sympathy of this select class—would be a waste of labour, and not true kindness to him. I would not apply the critical lens to a very young writer, who expects to leap from publication to praise. He is sure to learn in time that it is the privilege of but two or three of his seniors. Nor would I venture to bring such a form of criticism to bear on the poems of Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning. What they are they will be in spite of me, and of their kind their poems are incomparably excellent. Poets like these must be studied by the light of their own manifested powers. They have subjected their faults, and made them peculiarities or characteristics of their work, springing originally from penetrative insight, from imaginative complexity of perception, or from defective or superabundant energy of expression. They are to themselves ‘both law and impulse’—the flower of this generation of English poets; and as no man of science will take up a flower to make it a theme for the exposition of his peculiar taste in natural objects, so will no one, seriously estimating the value and the reach of criticism, presume to discuss the compositions of accomplished poets for the purpose of stating that they could have pleased him better. At any rate, if they are not perfect, no scolding will cure them, and it has been tried hard on Mr. Browning, who could scarcely have known anything of the breadth of his influence over his countrymen until he found himself surrounded by imitators, and saw them set above their master. Mr. Lytton ranks at present with the

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intermediate class of poets; writers much too strong to be injured by criticism; capable of delivering it themselves, and upon themselves; and the mould of whose work is still plastic. In a modest preface to the 'Chronicles and Characters,' he claims 'a patient perusal as a preliminary to any final judgement of a work which has occupied nearly seven years of his life.' It is a protest against the 'I like' and 'I don't like' of summary reviewers, and an invitation to criticism. Reviewers of poetry are always able men—able to express their opinions—and between heavy puffs and contemptuous notices, the public gains from them in the end some approximate idea of a poet's value. But they rarely speak of his aims and of the indication of great and good work to come from him; and in their business of interpreting public opinion to the public, they assume too broadly that they have the right to throw him aside if he shall not have pleased their private tastes.

'Suus cuique attributus est error :

Sed non videmus manticae quod in tergo est.'

They might remember this sound and wholesome critical precept, even though they should suppose themselves to be dealing with a Suffenus. We have not so many men of genius or of cleverness who are anxious to build up a name in letters, that it is necessary to turn an amazed frown on them when they produce an ambitious book not quite after the prevailing fashion; nor is our modern literature so rich in good things that we can afford to leave its growth to the fatness of the soil, and cherish only what delights a dilettante appetite. Goethe held, even in Germany, that art should be cultivated. The

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defenders of such literary gateways as we possess resemble, too often, the old Austrian out-station gendarmes, who used frequently to examine a passport by reading it upside down, and then declare it imperfect and unsatisfactory. No one would complain if they were zealous and acute keepers of the way. The grievance, to men feeling these matters a grievance, is that they let in a multitude, and have now and then to chase them out again with shocking severity. I bear in mind one unfortunate, unmatched for a loyal ode or a British sentiment in portly verse, who as poet and sage (I refrain in charity from writing down a famous name, now melancholy to look upon as an old football) was raised to the heights where idols sit, and nourished our nurseries and drawing-rooms, surely not in absolute contempt of their authority. Whether he beguiled, or forced, or, as they assert, crept through the reviewers' ranks, the vengeance of the gods that never cease kicking has been taken on him, and one cannot but accuse them of the double betrayal of a want of sensibility. And while this really representative bard of his country lived in the profound esteem of multitudes, Mr. Browning was continuing his struggle for recognition, much like 'the plants in mines' that his Paracelsus speaks of. So, though they have the importance of the weathercock to the sons of time, they are something less than infallible in pronouncing his verdicts. It cannot be otherwise with officials now acting as trumpets to the native literary appetites of their countrymen, and now undertaking to hammer a notion of things strange and new into them, after a process to which they have previously submitted.

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Mr. Browning's extraordinary gift of poetic humour does not, it is true, allow him to be put as a fair test of their general powers of discernment, which are beyond estimation; and seeing that they and their public are in close alliance, each in turn correcting and polishing the other, the individual may well consent to wither for their advancement. One marvels a little that any man happy enough to be independent of literature should, under these circumstances, pertinaciously issue volume upon volume in hot haste. Mr. Lytton's first volume, his 'Clytemnestra,' with the minor poems attached to it, was full of high promise—'Incarcerate him and keep him away from the publishers' has been said of a young poet by one who knew the perils of an opening success. Had Mr. Lytton kept back his next volume for something approaching to the prescribed Horatian term to which he has subjected his latest, he would not now be offering vastly superior work to experience the mortification of finding it less thankfully accepted. Ambition is a noble infirmity; but besides being careful to curb the incessant desire to gratify it, we must not forget that the perpetual strain of effort is the waste of power. Or, I should say, I think it holds in poetry that much writing wastes the powers. Publishing much is at least an evil that none will dispute. Those who cannot help themselves, and are in the chains, must do it. But those who are not should benefit from the pre-eminent advantage they enjoy. Prose is always ready to satiate the appetite for labour: they deal with it more than they will believe, and prose travels to limbo without a shriek. The road is wide for it in that direction. Prose

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strengthens the hand. It does not of necessity call up fictitious sentiments to inflate a conception run to languor. I allude especially to the habit of producing numberless minor poems on purely sentimental subjects. A large and noble theme has a framework that yields as much support as it demands. Lyrics yield none; and, when they are not spontaneous, they rob us of a great deal of our strength and sincerity. If they are true things coming of a man's soul, they are so much taken from him: if the reverse, they hurry him rapidly to waste. There should not be such a thing as a habit of lyrical composition. This effusion of song is not natural to us. The greatest of lyrists have the power but rarely, and if they published songs, and odes, and snatches only, their works would be remarkably contracted. In a stimulating season, when prompted by the passions of youth or of a generous sympathy, they give abundance; but that abundance does not make volumes—at least, not publishable volumes. A great lyrist (and we have one among us), inflamed by the woes of an unhappy people throbbing for fulness of life and freedom, sings perforce; but he has a great subject, and we do not see that it is his will which distinctly predominates in his verses. Shelley's lyrical pieces are few, considering the vigour of his gift of song; and so are those of Burns, and of Campbell and Hood. Heinrich Heine added a new element to his songs and ballads: an irritant exile breathed irony into them, and shaped them into a general form and significance. He is the unique example of a man who made himself his constant theme, and he pursued it up to the time when he was rescued from his 'mattress-grave.' By

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virtue of a cunning art he caused it to be interesting while he lived. I feel the monotony of it begin to grow on me often now when I take up the *Buch der Lieder*, the *Neuer Frühling*, and the *Romanzero*. Goethe's songs were the fruits of a long life. He tells us how they sprang up in him, and I do not doubt of his singing as the birds sing; but without irreverence it may be said that, in many cases, this was merely a self-indulgent mood to which German verse allured the highest of German poets. I love the larger number of them for his sake, not for their own. The Tuscan Giusti, one of the truest of modern lyrists, published very little. Alfred de Musset's songs, all of them exquisite, might be compassed in half a dozen pages of this review. In fact, it is from observation or meditation that poetry gets sinew and substance, and the practice of observing or meditating soon tames in poets the disposition to pour out verse profusely.

Mr. Lytton has published an excess of lyrical pieces. He is, I should say, an intellectual poet with a dramatic tendency, not lyrical. The design of the 'Chronicles and Characters' would argue for him the possession of a mind *contentus paucis lectoribus*, but there is still a slight *ad captandum* flavour in some of the minor poems and their metres which detracts from the merits of the volumes as a whole. He conceived possibly that variety and lightness were wanted to relieve the severe intellectual pressure. He might have trusted to his natural strength without any fears of the sort. I will first touch on his poetical qualifications for his work, and find such fault as I can. The sterner bent of his imagination does not deprive him of a vivid

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sense of beauty, or of warm colours to paint it in. The apparition of the Lydian queen to Gyges, in the poem of 'Gyges and Candaules,' is richly painted:—

'At length, deep-down the opposing gallery,
From out the long-drawn darkness flash'd a light;
And, peering from his purple privacy,
He spied, with red gold bound and robed in white,
Sole as the first star in a sleepy sky,
That while men watch it, grows more large and bright,
The slow queen sweeping down the lucid floor;
And in her hand a silver lamp she bore.

'Before her, coming, floated a faint fear
Into his heart who watch'd her whiteness move
Swan-soft along the lamp-lit marble clear,
And, lingering o'er her in the beams above,
The wing'd and folded shadows shift and veer,
Her airy follower—'

The alliteration here is subordinate to the charm of the verse. But what of lines like these?—

'And first self-scorn shut all his sullen sense
Within himself: but soon the odours sweet,
Streamed from the misty lamps, and that intense
Rich-scented silence, seeming to entreat
Some sound to ease its sumptuous somnolence,
Lured out his thoughts—'

The fifth line is pure sibilation. Nor does Mr. Lytton pursue this art in liquids or in single consonants only. The reader is tempted to think that the poet is trying to get force of expression from the violent iteration of similar sounds, and that he beats a gong instead of sweeping a lyre.

Since Cupid with Lely's 'Campaspe played at cards for kisses,' and

'An Austrian army awfully arrayed
Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade,'

one would have supposed that this old outworn net of the Sirens had small chance of catching a poet.

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The curious thing, too, is that vowels, naturally and pardonably seductive to those who would produce melody in verse attract Mr. Lytton but slightly. It is as if barbarous jewellery sometimes exercised more influence over him than charm of tones. Yet he has a vivid sense of rhythmical beauty. His versification of M. Auguste Dozon's *Recueil of Serbski Pesme* is admirable for grace and tenderness: see 'The Battle of Kossovo,' 'The Malady of Moïo,' and minor pieces. He has rendered them with a hand in perfect affinity with their simple poetic charm. Here is one:—

He. 'And art thou wed, my beloved?
My beloved of long ago.
She. I am wed, my beloved, and I have given
A child to this world of woe.
And the name I have given my child is thine;
So that, when I call to my little one,
The heaviness of this heart of mine
For a little while may be gone.
For I say not—"Hither, hither my son!"
But—"Hither, my love, my beloved."

A girl replies to her lover, repeating his images:—

'By the sweet heavens, young lover!
No odour from the orange have I stole;
Nor have I robbed for thee,
Dearest, the amber dower
Of the building bee,
From any hollow tower
In oaken bole:
But if on this poor breast thou dost discover
Fragrance of such sweet power,
Trust me, O my beloved and my lover,
'Tis not of basil, nor the immortal flower,
But from a virgin soul.'

Some exquisite love-poems, to be found in Talvi's collection, which won Goethe's enthusiastic praise even in the garb she gave them, are missing in

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Mr. Lytton's volume. It would be a boon to the language if he would add them to another edition of his *Serbski Pesme*. He has shown—and it is not a common feat—that he can convey almost uninjured their delicate passion, their soft mournful fervour, and the varying colours distinguishing them above the love-songs of any other race. None but a poet keenly sensible of simplicity could have reproduced them. This makes it the more astonishing that he should still occasionally strike a false note in his lyrics. There is appended to the 'Jacqueline of Holland,' republished in the new volumes, a dirge melody, bearing perhaps a burden of relationship to Webster. A little care bestowed on it would have made it wholly beautiful.

'Pluck the pale sky-colour'd periwinkle,
That haunts in dewy courts and shuns the light;
Gather dim violets and the wild eyebright,
That green old ruin'd walls doth oversprinkle;
And cull, to keep her company
In death, rue, sage, and rosemary,
And flowery thyme from the faint bed o' the bee;
For they, when summer's o'er, make savour sweet
To cherish winter: strew black-spikèd clove
And mint, and marjoram, to make my love
A misty fragrance for her winding sheet,
And pull not up red tulips, nor the rose,
For these be flaunting flowers that live i' the world's gay shows.'

Our native eyebright is not characteristically a climber of ruins, and the 'faint' bed of the bee seems a sentimental intrusion (I find also 'pert' violet an odd epithet for a modest flower in another poem); but the charge of a lapse of emotional simplicity falls on the epithet 'misty.' To entreat kind souls to make his love 'a misty fragrance for her winding sheet' is to paint and not to sing a sorrow, and

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diverts lyrical pathos, much as if a horn were to air itself in two or three fantastic twirls in the Dead March in Saul. Description has at once taken the place of the voice of grief. In point of melody and natural colour, the 'Dirge of Jacqueline' had the true quality of a dirge, though I should say that the last line, by its length and summary, renders it too conclusive, too final to the ear for grief. It appears to close the vault, leaving bones only and a good character within.

The poet has habituated himself to lyrical composition so strongly that the 'Opis and Arge,' in which is found the key-note of his 'Chronicles and Characters,' is set to a series of lyrical pieces. Now the whole collection of poems here is hung on an intellectual design; necessarily the indicatory poems are surcharged with it. The virgins of Herodotus are tuned to sing thoughts that are not flexible in the lighter measures, and a strange contrast is produced by the alternations of their entangled strains with the admirably smooth and clear descriptive rhymed lines of the poet. The thoughts are pregnant, but one has to seize the lyric bodily and dissect it to get at them.

' Listen, sister !
For my spirit on the throng
Of the ages rushes strong.
When the strong archetypal moulders
Of mortal clay.
Have bequeath'd to unborn beholders
The forms that stay
Fix'd and fast
In the flux of time,
For man's thought, cast
In a mould sublime,
And the few fine spirits first needed
To build up the walls of the world
(From the protoplast freshly proceeded)

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Having, each from his fortress, unfurl'd
The standard of man's realm, made fuller
For all men by one man alone,—
Over marble, or music, or colour,
Or language,—are gather'd and gone
From the sun's sight, like stars of the morning
Lost in level enlargements of light,
Where the world needs no longer their warning
Or witness to steer through the night,
Then the men that come after, not equal
In height, but more spacious in span,' etc.

The idea grows darkly visible, but how much better it would have stood out in lines of plain volume like those which are given to picturesque description:—

• ‘The sparkle of a golden sandal shined
One moment on the mountain peak. A white
And vaporous hem of eddying vesture, drawn
Across a saffron-colour'd cliff from sight
Slowly, left all along the mountain lawn,
Among the tawny grass and camomile,
A tremulous streak, soon quench'd in day's strong smile
Of waving splendour. Then those mariners all
Rose up amazed, and drew out of the deep
The hookèd anchor, and drove out to sea
Their little bark beneath a shadowy shore.
But while they set the sail and plied the oar,
Full-lighted on the heavenly mountain wall
Leapt the large sunrise, and all around shook free
His flaming wings: when lo! on every steep,
Wrapt with the aurean vapour rolling high,
An august image stood, majestic,
With lifted arm, far off, 'twixt earth and sky.'

One has only to quote the finer passages to correct any transient unjust impression that a critical examination may produce.

‘Life's image, born of the brain
In the form which the hand hath fashioned,
Shall for ever unmarr'd retain
Life's moment the most impassioned ;

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All power that in act hath been
Put forth, shall perish never ;
And life's beauty once felt and seen
Is life beautified for ever.'

Here the lines are crisper, and the thought clearer to vision, but the same criticism is applicable to them, I think.

The 'Chronicles and Characters' are a legend of the ages, differing from M. Victor Hugo's, inasmuch as Mr. Lytton's aim, when he keeps to it rigorously, is less to exhibit the gradual development of the deeper and sweeter nature of humanity than to make note of mental progress and the growth of human culture. Hugo starts with Eve and ends with the judgement trump; Mr. Lytton from mythology downward to the present time, over which he pronounces a short optimistic sermon by way of epilogue:—

'Rejoice in the good that God gives
By the hand of beneficent Ill,
And be glad that He leaves to our lives
Means to make them heroical still.'

Hugo does not touch on Neoplatonism or the philosophies. He finds themes in the Old Testament and the New, and in the New it is Christ raising Lazarus. Divine love active on behalf of humanity, and the hardness of the priests:—

'Ceux qui virent cela crurent en Jésus-Christ.
Or, les prêtres, selon qu'au livre il est écrit,
S'assemblèrent, troublés, chez le prêteur de Rome ;
Sachant que Christ avait ressuscité cet homme,
Et que tous avaient vu le sépulcre s'ouvrir,
Ils dirent : " Il est temps de le faire mourir. "'

Mr. Lytton ventures on the Passion of the Cross, and an intellectual Satan claiming his place among

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the progressive steps of man as Prince of this World, addressing the Angel of the Watch thus:—

‘Look on me. I am
Man’s mind’s eternal protest against Law,
Man’s life’s eternal protest against Love.
A time there may be, though it must be far,
When man, by knowledge reconciled to Law
In things material, shall convert to good
All that for ages I have made to them
Material evil.

‘When man no more
My work provides, thine own shall lack provision;
Whose task on earth is but the consequence
Of my procedure; temporary both.’

Hugo does not look on evil with the same reposeful sentiment. His Ratbert is hard and horrible. His mountain Momotombo has a word to say against men—or their priests. He paints black deadly black, and touches it with no light lancet-point. With the exception of the powerful ‘Irene’ in the Byzantine episodes, Mr. Lytton shows the intellectual temper towards the devil and his doings—‘the only critic of God’s works who does not praise them’; and when he abandons that, he is, by the impulse of his mind, dramatic. The philosopher insists to escape being compromised by a positive violent condemnation of ‘beneficent Ill,’ unless he is forced to it by some character bare of all suggestive humours, unprovocative of the sedater irony he loves, though always without irreverence to indulge. It will be seen that his ‘Legend of the Ages’ has a distinct mark of its own. If he fails, it is not in conception; and he fails in execution only from having attempted more than was possible for poet to accomplish. He has taken the widest field he could select, and made it as difficult to himself as ingenuity could devise to build up a

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complete work in it. There could have been no artistic prompting in him, for example, to write the mediæval pieces ('Fair Yoland with the Yellow Hair,' 'Trial by Combat') after the mediæval manner. I presume so, for these poems are positive failures. Compare them with Mr. Morris's 'Haystack in the Floods' in his first volume of poems. This low-toned mediævalism, depending upon colour, monotony, and mist, must spring out of a poet's nature, and is not to be seized in passing. Mr. Lytton has not the archaic tongue. The mediævalism of Hugo's prodigious combat between Roland and Oliver and of his Aymerillot, is based on huge outlines and the child-like simplicity of the filling in. No paladin of the army of the great Charles being willing to oblige him by taking Narbonne, Aymerillot, a modest little fellow of twenty years, without plume or scutcheon, undertakes the business single-handed:—

'Charles, plus rayonnant que l'archange céleste,
S'écria : "Tu seras, pour ce propos hautain,
Aymery de Narbonne et comte palatin,
Et l'on te parlera d'une façon civile.
Va fils !" Le lendemain Aymery prit la ville.'

It is a veritable *coup de tonnerre du moyen âge*. At the close of the fifth day of tough fighting on the borders of the Rhone, Oliver proposes a settlement of their dispute to Roland:—

"Roland, nous n'en finirons point.
Tant qu'il nous restera quelque tronçon au poing,
Nous lutterons ainsi que lions et panthères.
Ne vaudrait-il pas mieux que nous devinssions frères?
Écoute, j'ai ma sœur, la belle Aude au bras blanc;
Épouse-la."

"Pardieu ! je veux bien," dit Roland.
"Et maintenant buvons, car l'affaire était chaude."
C'est ainsi que Roland épousa la belle Aude.'

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This is the breath of primitive mediævalism. It would have been wiser and, I think, more in harmony with Mr. Lytton's design, had he also gone to legendary sources for this feature, instead of tasking invention and colouring his work in a known style that he was in no way bound to undertake. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century, at least, there were plenty of salient legends if he thought fit to shun the fountain of Malory and the Arthurian cycles; and there was Froissart for a guide, and the Provençal and Spanish romances to choose from. These poems and 'Last Words,' a representation of the sentimentalism of modern days, discredit his executive power, as would be the case with that of almost any poet who attempted as much as he has done in these seven hundred pages of verse.

'The Dead Pope,' 'The Duke's Laboratory,' 'Adolphus, Duke of Gueldres,' are scenic illustrations of the idea in progress. 'The Scroll and its Interpreters' keeps close to the thought.

'One asks me why
Is Evil everywhere? and I reply
That everywhere there may be growth of Good.
Would I forego that growth, even if I could?
By no means.'

It is the learned Jew, Ben Enoch, speaking. But the poem contains a great deal of the writer's studious mind, and deserves an attentive perusal. The concluding couplet, given to Time passing in the silence after the interlocutors have exchanged farewells, does not compliment us for the pains we have been taking, and is not wanted.

It is in the 'Siege of Constantinople' that he shows

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his strength in perfection. I object to the terminating line,—

‘ In this way Venice took Constantinople,’

which reminds us of the ‘*C’est ainsi que Roland*,’ etc., and does not come well at the close of a long rhymed chronicle, though it should be after the old chronicler’s fashion. He is a master of the narrative rhymed ten-syllable couplet. He can be smooth, crisp, and terse in it, flowing and redundant at will. The narrative hurries or is retarded for natural scenic passages, taking its course like a full-sailed imperial barge, little impeded by reason of its rich lading. It is, in fact, a fine epical poem of the two sieges, with blind old Enrico Dandolo for the central figure, among crowds of Oriental barbarians and the chivalry of Europe. More vigorous and better sustained narrative verse it would be hard to find. It is as distinctively Mr. Lytton’s as the simpler style of the ‘*Jason*’ is peculiar to Mr. Morris, and without mannerism. For an example of flexibility, the catalogue of the knights marshalled under Dandolo may be viewed as without parallel for spirited conciseness in this exceedingly difficult form of verse, which more than any other tempts to distension and flatness. He has caught at times something of the simple graphic manner distinguishing the chronicler of St. Louis’ crusade; but no effort of imitation is anywhere visible. The descriptions of scenery, battles, pomp, and splendour are dwelt on as the circumstances prompt them, and the result, in the reader’s mind, is a sense of completeness and finish only attainable by poets that have an abounding energy and have learnt to command it. Mr. Lytton is one of the few poets who can narrate. The press

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of narrative holds in check his tendency to dramatise, which is perhaps attributable to a poetic reaction against a rather too despotic intellectual ascendancy. I will give one example of it from the 'Thanatos Athanatou,' when the Angel of the Watch, to terminate his colloquy with Satan, says:—

'Put forth thy hand.

SATAN

Where art thou? feebly sounds
Thy voice, vain angel: strong in word, but weak
In act to hold what now I seize. Thy voice
Floats to me fainter, fainter! and thy form
Fades further, further, further, from my ken.
Thou fliest, cherub!

THE ANGEL

Self-deceiver, no!
Here, where I was, I am; and what I held
I hold. But thee thine ever-changing place
Hath changed already. Prince of passing ills,
Already in the Past thy footstep strays,
Seeking the future.'

The effective instance of a subtle idea put in action will show what I mean, and it is proof of an artistic nature that it is never allowed to obtrude on his narrative verse. The allocutions are not prolonged; the dialogues are short and emphatic. Description is rich and simple, and there are no hints of a depth beyond the fathoming of vulgar sight. 'Licinius,' written in the same verse as the 'Siege,' is more epigrammatic, aims higher, and is not generally so flowing, for there Mr. Lytton seeks to give the shadow of a meaning behind the visible one, and passages of very splendid description are here and there marred by dislocated lines, and a—to my mind—objectionable style of painting in catalogue, *ex. gr.* —

'Evening. At morn the battle.'

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The rejection of the verb does not give stateliness, but a twang of pertness oddly discordant with the theme. The opening of 'Licinius' is a contrast to the poet's ease of manner when he is breathing the robuster air of the chroniclers. These first lines have the effect of stammering:—

'It was the fall and evening of a time
In whose large daylight, ere it sank, sublime
And strong, as bulks of brazen gods, that stand,
Bare-bodied, with helm'd head and armèd hand,
All massive monumental thoughts of hers
Rome's mind had mark'd in stately characters
Against the world's horizon.'

One cannot say that the lines are confused; but they seem to hesitate and come uncertainly, not as introductory lines should come. Further on they are exceedingly vigorous. The conception of 'Licinius' is clear and full of grandeur. The stout old Roman preparing to give battle for the gods of his country and his ancestry is finely imagined; but against the objection that this tough veteran of the wars, of a purely Conservative Pagan spirit, should be found antedating a Christian dream, in which Apollo speaks philosophy, and Love—our frank friend Cupid—becomes transformed to a divinity worthy of presiding over modern tea-tables, I can only oppose the plea that the writing is magnificent, and the poem too good to be over-shadowed, were the objections ten times more forcible. This also may be said of the tale of Candaules' queen, evidently not one of the later pieces of Mr. Lytton's composition, as I suppose the 'Siege of Constantinople' to be. The poem should be revised. To find among a succession of beautiful verses one like the following, in which it would almost be

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thought that the poet having preferred the luscious to the severe method of treatment—the style of the Eve of St. Agnes to that of the Laodamia—prudently tempered it with a dash of the grotesque, is astonishing:—

‘ Last she with listless long-delaying hand
The golden sandals loosed from her white feet,
And loosed from her warm waist the golden band.
The milk-white tunic slid off its sweet
Snow-surfaced slope, and left half-bare her bland
Full-orbèd breast. But in the fainting heat
Of his bewilder’d heart and fever’d sight,
Here Gyges in the curtain groaned outright.’

Keats, when his hero is in a like condition of ineffable anguish, says, Porphyro grew faint, and has been reproached for it as for a bit of simpering unmanliness. The miserable Gyges may certainly have sounded this loud note of warning to all the peeping Toms of after time: it is but too easy for the reader to comprehend his feelings, but in what a line does the poet crave sympathy for the sufferer. Very little labour is required to render this poem enjoyable throughout. The voluptuousness of colouring proper to the subject is pervaded with tragic sentiment, and we are made conscious that the fair woman, in the supreme beauty of her nakedness, is being outraged, and will have blood for it. ‘Cræsus and Adrastus’ claims higher critical praise for its workmanship, and is simple and pathetic. In both these poems a good story is well told.

The same excellent narrative faculty is shown in the ‘Apple of Life,’ which shadows out a poem of old Oriental wisdom. It is the Brahminical legend transferred to the courts of King Solomon. The Hindoo

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king slaughters his fair unfaithful wife, but Solomon dissolves into wise sentences. Voluminous lines are well suited to the pompous gravity of the Eastern tale, with its semi-transparent mysticism and rich descriptive passages:—

‘In cluster, high lamps, spices, odours, each side
Burning inward and onward from cinnamon ceilings, down distances vast,
Of voluptuous vistas, illumined deep halls, through whose silentness pass’d
King Solomon sighing: where columns colossal stood, gathered in groves
As the trees of the forest in Libanus—there where the wind, as it moves
Whispers “I, too, am Solomon’s servant!” huge trunks hid in garlands of
gold,
On whose tops the skilled sculptors of Sidon had granted men’s gaze to behold
How the phoenix that sits on the cedar’s lone summit ‘mid fragrance and fire,
Ever dying and living, hath loaded with splendours her funeral pyre;
How the stork builds her nest on the pine-top; the date from the palm-
branch depends;
And the shaft of the blossoming aloe soars crowning the life which it ends.
And from hall on to hall, in the doors, mute, magnificent slaves, watchful-eyed,
Bow’d to earth as King Solomon pass’d them.’

The king gives the apple of life to his beautiful Shulamite. She in turn hurries to present it to her lover, Prince Azariah, and calls to him very musically:—

‘Ope the door, ope the lattice! Arise! Let me in, O my love! It is I,
Thee the bride of King Solomon loveth. Love, tarry not. Love, shall I die
At thy door? I am sick of desire. For my love is more comely than gold,
More precious to me is my love than the throne of a king that is old.
Behold, I have pass’d through the city, unseen of the watchmen. I stand
By the doors of the house of my love till my love lead me in by the hand.’

But the author’s strength is best exhibited by some extracts from the ‘Siege of Constantinople,’ where he has a fuller theme and larger space. Here is a scene in the court of Alexius, the usurper:—

‘At the Emperor’s right hand
Tracing upon the floor with snaky wand
Strange shapes, was standing the astrologer
And mystic, Ishmael the son of Shur,

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A swarthy, lean, and melancholy man,
 With eyes in caverns, an Arabian,
 Who seem'd to notice nothing, save his own
 Strange writing on the floor before the throne.
 At the Emperor's feet, half-naked and half-robed,
 With rivulets of emeroides that throbb'd
 Green fire as her rich breathings billow'd all
 Their thrill'd and glittering drops, crouch'd Jezraäl,
 The fair Egyptian, with strange-colour'd eyes
 Full of fierce change and somnolent surprise.
 She, with upslanted shoulder leaning couch'd
 On one smooth elbow, sphynx-like, calm, and crouch'd,
 Tho' motionless, yet seem'd to move,—its slim
 Fine slope so glidingly each glossy limb
 Curved on the marble, melting out and in
 Her gemmy tunic, downward to her thin
 Clear ankles, ankleted with dull pale gold,
 Thick gushing thro' a jewell'd hoop, down roll'd
 All round her, rivers of dark slumbrous hair,
 Sweeping her burnish'd breast, sharp-slanted, bare,
 And sallow shoulder.'

For a contrast take the description of the Venetian
 fleet passing down the Dardanelles, and coming within
 view of the Constantinople of the Lower Empire :—

' In his strong pines, adown the displaced deep,
 Shoulders the Pelegrino,—half asleep,
 With wavy fins each side a scarlet breast
 Slanted. Hard by, more huge than all the rest—
 Air's highest, water's deepest, denizen—
 A citadel of ocean, thronged with men
 That tramp in silk and steel round battlements
 Of windy wooden streets, 'mid terraced tents
 And turrets, under shoals of sails unfurl'd,—
 That vaunting monster Venice calls "The World."

' And now is past each purple promontory
 Of Sestos and Abydos, famed in story.
 And now all round the deep blue bay arise
 Into the deep blue air, o'er galleries
 Of marble, marble galleries; and lids
 O'er lids of shining streets; dusk pyramids
 O'er pyramids; and temple walls o'er walls
 Of glowing gardens, whence white sunlight falls
 From sleepy palm to palm; and palace tops
 O'ertopp'd by palaces. Nought ever stops

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The struggling glory, from the time he leaves
His myrtle-muffled base, and higher heaves
His mountain march from golden-grated bower
To bronzen-gated wall,—and on, from tower
To tower, until at last deliciously
All melts in azure summer and sweet sky.
Then after anthem sung, sonorous all
The bronzen trumpets to the trumpets call;
Sounding across the sea from bark to bark
Where floats the Wingèd Lion of St. Mark,
The mighty signal for assault.'

Domenico Tintoretto's painting of the storming of Constantinople by Venetians and crusaders in the hall of the Great Council of the Palazzo Ducale, together with the capture of Zara by Tintoretto, and of Cattaro by Vicentino, a strange confusion of red masts and long lances pushed by men-at-arms, and flying arrows and old engines of war, may have been in Mr. Lytton's vision when he wrote the vivid passage which succeeds:—

'Swift from underneath upspout
Thick showers of hissing arrows that down-rain
Their rattling drops upon the walls, and stain
The blood-streak'd bay. The floating forest groans
And creaks, and reels, and cracks. The rampart stones
Clatter and shriek beneath the driven darts.
And on the shores, and at the gates, upstarts,
One after one, each misshaped monster fell
Of creaking ram and cumbrous mangonel.
Great stones, down jumping, chop, and split, and crush
The rocking towers; wherefrom the spearmen rush.
The morning star of battle, marshalling all
That movement massive and majestic,
Gay through the tumult which it guides doth go
The grand grey head of gallant Dandolo,
With what a full heart following that fine head—
Thine, noble Venice, by thy noblest led!
In his blithe-dancing turret o'er the sea,
Glad as the grey sea-eagle, hovers he
Through sails in flocks and masts in avenues.

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'Pietro Alberti, the Venetian, whom
His sword lights, shining naked 'twixt his teeth
Sharp-gripp'd, through rushing arrows, wrapt with death,
Leaps from his ship into the waves; now stands
On the soak'd shore; now climbs with bleeding hands
And knees the wall; now left, now right, swift, bright
Wild weapons round him whirl and sing; now right,
Now left he smites.

'In clattering cataract
The invading host roll down. Disrupt, distract,
The invaded break and fly. The great church bells
Toll madly, and the battering mangonels
Bellow. The priests in long procession plant
The cross before them, passing suppliant
To meet the marching conquest.'

Historical scene-painting done with so broad and firm a hand is rare at any time, and greatly to be praised. The poem is maintained throughout at this elevated pitch, devoid of any sensible strain.

The valedictory lines of Thomas Müntzer to Martin Luther are also in conception and execution very good, and harmonious to the general design of the volumes. My personal distaste for broken metres, that lose their music in the attempt to symbolise the effects of an operatic libretto, may make me unjust to the 'Opis and Arge,' and the scenic lyrics of 'Thanatos Athanaton,' and it seems to me that this last poem should not have had the heavy drag on it of the lengthened dialectical encounter of the rival Princes of Good and Evil. It might be divided into parts. But it is finely imagined, and, as an intellectual conception, a grand centre-piece.

MRS. MEYNELL'S TWO BOOKS OF ESSAYS¹

The gift for talking well has been said to transcend excellent singing in charm. We can admit that the writing of good prose in our unschooled composite English is an achievement beyond any save the highest flight of song. Mrs. Meynell has practised on either instrument, poetry being, of course, her first love. To the metrical themes attempted by her she brings emotion, sincerity, a sufficient measure of the minstrel's skill, together with an exquisite play upon our finer chords, quite her own, not to be heard from another. Some of her lines have the living tremour in them. The poems are beautiful in idea as in grace of touch; and they are unambitious, born modest; they do not lend themselves to clamorous advocacy of their merits. 'Quid enim contendat hirundo cygnis?'—her verse has the swallow's wing and challenges none. It is in her essays that her singular powers have their range, and without sacrifice of the poet she is.

Readers with a turn for literature have noticed of late a column once weekly in the Autolycus basket of the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' considering it princely journalism. Mrs. Meynell's second volume is her selection from these criticisms and essays, as was

¹ The National Review, Aug. 1896. 'The Rhythm of Life,' and 'The Colour of Life.' (John Lane).

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her foregoing from the series printed in the 'National Observer.' They are small books, and they contain much substance, both to refresh and to instruct. But it is not as a quintessential extract that they commend themselves to us, though they are full of matter. The essays have, in these days of the overflow, the merit of saying just enough on the subject, leaving the reader to think. They can be read repeatedly, because they are compact and suggestive, and at the same time run with clearness. The surprise coming on us from their combined grace of manner and sanity of thought, is like one's dream of what the recognition of a new truth would be. Conceivably the writer was fastidious to the extreme degree during the term of scholarship, but that is now shown only in a style having 'the walk of the Goddess'; and when she speaks her wise things, it is the voice of one standing outside the curtain of the Oracle, humbly among her hearers. She has no pretensions to super-excellence, however confirmed her distastes. Her rule of the *μηδὲν ἄγαν* has become the law of her nature, as it may be seen at a first reading.

Mrs. Meynell discountenances nimiety in any form, the much scorn, the shout of encomium, the exhibition of the copious vocabulary. Part of her education was influenced insensibly by one whom she respected for 'his gentle and implacable judgement'; and as he 'disliked violence chiefly because violence is apt to confess its own limits,' she received her guidance in criticism as in conduct. Her scorn, when it is roused, is lightly phrased, her wit glances, her irony is invisible, though it slays; and if she admires she withholds exclamations. Intemperateness, redun-

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dancy, the *ampoulé* and pretentious, are discarded by her, nor may her heroes be guilty. She cuts her way for herself through that wood to a precision never emphatic unless it be intentionally, for the signification; and this precision she contrives to render flexible, conversational even; she achieves the literary miracle of subordinating compressed choice language to grace of movement, an easy and pleasant flow until her theme closes. Her theme, too, is held in hand, to be rolled out like the development of a sonnet, because of that same succinctness of idea inspiring to direct her equable delivery. The papers outside the descriptive and the critical are little sermons, ideal sermons—let no one uninstructed by them take fright at the title, they are not preachments; they are of the sermon's right length, of about as long to read as the passage of a cathedral chant in the ear, and keeping throughout to the plain step of daily speech, they leave a sense of stilled singing on the mind they fill. In all her writing we read of a brain that has found its untrammelled medium for utterance, with stores to deliver. Necessarily, where an intellect is at work, ours should be active, and we should know the roots of the words. She does not harp on a point; she pays her readers the compliment of assuming that they have intelligence. But she does not offer them puzzles. The writing is limpid in its depths.

By what strict discipline her task of preparation was done may be gathered in part from her essay on 'Composure' and on 'Rejection.' They are lessons in the composition of sound and vibrant English, a sensitive English retaining dignity. Simple Saxon

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is too much a brawler; and emotion, imagination, the eye on things, will be shrouded by obtrusive Latin. The voice we know is not the familiar voice when we hear it through a horn. But seasonable notes of the horn will help to elevation and the more embracing discourse. Latin offers that advantage if the words are discreetly chosen. The greater suppleness in a tongue of long usage by many races must, as Littré argues, make it an instrument of expression for the larger meanings and the delicate—the voluble semitones that the Teutonic cannot rival. Mrs. Meynell's plea is not for a return of the learnedness of the old coining Divines, *bien entendu*; she pleads for the eighteenth century's happy refuge in the language of greater tranquillity, 'Johnson's tranquillity,' as an ethical need of our day. 'We want to quell the exaggerated decision of monosyllables. We want the poise and pause that imply vitality at times better than headstrong movement expresses it.' They are not the times when Othello has Iago by the throat. Passion knows no tongue but plain Saxon with us. Mrs. Meynell's allusion is to the times for transmitting ideas, or summarily narrating events; and in that respect Lowell was of a like opinion, at a period when the mania for mother Saxon was wrenching our parents in literary language asunder to the state of divorce. Yet we have so Saxonized 'ation' and 'ition' as to make those polysyllables derived from the French repugnant if they are not electively handled; and the 'tranquillity of Johnson,' in Rasselas, for example, conveys the scenes to our musing fancy as effectively as a sleeper's dreams are presented by the sonorous trumpet of his nose.

MRS. MEYNELL'S BOOKS OF ESSAYS

"We are not, however, counselled to return to the Johnsonian stalk, the marching of words like men-at-arms in plated steel, under which the Saxon was a trampled stubble. 'One of the most charming things that a writer of English can achieve is the repayment of the united teaching by linking their results so exquisitely in his own practice that the words of the two schools shall be made to meet each other with a surprise and delight that shall prove them at once gayer strangers and sweeter companions than the world knew they were.' By this linking of results our scholarly literature may get to a rhythm of life having the colour of life. How it is when 'pure Saxon' reigns is to be seen in Freeman's History, where the hopping native monosyllables and stumpy trochees are multiplied to knock the sense of a situation upon our understanding until vision and connection are lost within us for lack of the one compendious Latin word.

A powerful personal sentiment was required to preserve the equilibrium in Johnson, with whom Latin was his lingual club. The balance of the tongues is the task for us, and it is hard to maintain even where there is no strong predilection for the one or the other. Mrs. Meynell herself may be lured in the cooler moment to a slight inclination. In the first sentence of 'Rushes and Reeds' we have: 'Taller than the grass and lower than the trees, there is another growth that feels the implicit spring.' One seems to have the enfolded spring of the year on an encloistered grass-plot when it is capped by this Latinity. We are commonly sensible of the library's atmosphere only in the apposite condensing term for

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the subject treated. She is too sensitively responsive to the natural world, to the humanity about her and the cry of a present time, for the exercise of doctorial pedantry. Her stores of knowledge, stores of reflection, burden her reader as little as she is hampered by them. Her eloquence is shown by repression, with the effect. Occasionally, as in 'The Lesson of Landscape, Sun, Cloud, Winds of the World,'—notably the great south-west—her hand is loosened. Her disposition is to a firm grasp of the reins, and her characteristic is everywhere the undertone. We have had our eminent masters of style. We have had the stylist of the picked English, in which we saw the picking; the stylist in elegant English, *se dandinant*—very pardonably—under the consciousness of acknowledged elegance. Mrs. Meynell has much of Pyrrha's charm, the style correcting wealth and attaining to simplicity by trained art, the method unobtruded. Her probed diction has the various music in the irregular footing of prose, and if the sentences remind us passingly of the Emersonian shortness, they are not abrupt, they are smoothly sequent. It may be seen that she would not push for rivalry; the attraction is in her reserve. She must be a diligent reader of the Saintly Lives. Her manner presents to me the image of one accustomed to walk in holy places and keep the eye of a fresh mind on our tangled world, happier in observing than in speaking; careful to speak but briefly to such ear-beaten people, and then only when reflections press, the spirit is fervent, or observation calls for an exposure of some hopeful or some doubtful tendencies.

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Her use of the undertone in the painting of a portrait, the sketching of a scene, is an artistic revelation. The few affirmative strokes placed among the retiring features of the gentleman in a 'Remembrance' surpass vividness in the impression. They make a Rembrandt canvas. The scene 'At Monastery Gates,' soberly coloured as it is, remains with us; we are drawn by an allurements, that is not the writer's invitation, to share her feeling. She feels deeply, saying little. A funny incident occurring in the monastery is related with an unformed smile, and the laughs are in it. Like the hero of her portrait, she has 'compassion on the multitude.' The tenderness inspiring the thoughtfulness of the 'Domus Angusta' is not stressed for an effect of pathos, but the reader's mind and heart are touched, enlarged, one may say with truth.

'The narrow house is a small human nature compelled to a large human destiny, charged with a fate too great, a history too various, for its slight capacities.' . . . 'That narrow house—there is sometimes a message from its living windows. Its bewilderment, its reluctance, its defect, show by moments from eyes that are apt to express none but common things. There are allusions, involuntary appeals in those brief glances. Far from me and from my friends be the misfortune of meeting such looks in reply to pain of our inflicting. To be clever and sensitive, and to hurt the foolish and the stolid—wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world? Not I, by this heavenly light.'

The undertone rises there to a point of shrillness for once. Poor average humanity—the world of the

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inarticulate—has long wanted such an advocate. Could Portia plead better before the court? It is in Portia's tone. A similar impressive reserve is noticeable whenever this writer touches on children. There is not the word of affectionateness; her knowledge and her maternal love of them are shown in her ready entry into the childish state and transcript of its germinal ideas, the feelings of the young,—a common subject for the sentimentalising hand, from which nothing is gathered. Only deep love could furnish the intimate knowledge to expound them so. Perhaps the most poetic, most suggestive also, of the essays in these two books is the one on 'The Illusion of Historic Time,' treating of the child's views of historical events, illuminatingly and delightfully describing what the child has for his great possession in the early days, and what the man has lost, though not absolutely lost if he imagined when he was a child. 'Rome was founded when we began Roman history, and that is why it seems so long ago. Suppose the man of thirty-five heard, at that present age, for the first time of Romulus. Why, Romulus would be nowhere. But he built his wall when every one was seven years old. It is by good fortune that "ancient" history is taught in the only ancient days. . . . By learning something of antiquity in the first ten years, the child enlarges the sense of time for all mankind.' The essay is in its essence a concentrated treatise on the imagination of childhood and the uses in nourishing it; a piece of work of more than the literary value for which it is remarkable. It is work that philosophers may read with enlivenment; instructed, perhaps.

MRS. MEYNELL'S BOOKS OF ESSAYS

Mrs. Meynell indicates here and there that the 'sense of humour' is the touch within us restraining from excess. Were such the case, our people would be convicted of deficiency where the common belief is in their having a fair endowment. They can laugh; they can also extravagate, can be ultra-solemn in bodies, in journals, past measure overblown, pan-anglicanly tedious, and they are peculiar for their dogged merriment in coursing the toy-shop hare of a rank absurdity or flattering national habit round and round the field years after its creaking mechanism should have told them it has an acuter sensibility of the excessive than they. No, the principle of restraint, the leaning to proportion, is an intellectual attribute, and humour is apart from the intellect as an influence; it is often foreign to the intellect, unsanctioned, a helot at holiday or native claiming license under the dominant lord. Restraint comes of an habitual government of our faculties by the Comic Spirit—the livelier element of common sense, which has mounted to the intellectual station perforce of being more imaginative than the ordinary assemblage in debate over needs and customs. It is Right Reason's right hand weapon. Mrs. Meynell's paper on 'Pathos' (sham pathos—the craze for detecting it in a broad grin) would alone be sufficient to show that she has the comic insight eminently among modern writers. She is armed for penetrative criticism, and armoured to blunt the point of attack. Were it creative with her, she would no doubt not be so securely clad. Comic creative energy somewhat shakes composure, and is tricky, given to take different forms for covert purposes. Nothing so much provokes ἀγανάκτησις in

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English critics. The writer guilty of this offence shall run the gauntlet of them all down the line at every new publication, up to the end. Can she be more tolerant—or less consistent? In the passive manifestation of it, seeing that she is critical chiefly to admire, and courteous when her delicate stroke is mortal, we have to seek her peers—that is, in England.

Although she condenses, by virtue of a contemplative habit, she is reluctantly a phrase-maker; as a rule, only when the pressure of her subject enforces it: *e.g.*, of a gifted man marked by literary abstinence: 'He had an exquisite style from which to refrain.' Or, contrasting Greek symmetry in art with Japanese distortion, under an illustration of the human form: 'Man is Greek without and Japanese within.' There are more. But evidently she does not string her jewels on the way by a recurrence to the note-book. A lapse upon later journalese, in a sentence negatively describing the east wind, after a splendid picture of the south-west, offers testimony. They come from the running pen. So little does this thoughtful writer incline to the packed phrase or the smart, that one speculates on her attitude fronting an aphorist. The imposing Professor of Wisdom would require a stout constitution to keep him from seceding into vapour beneath her quiet scrutiny.

Whether the habit of journalism is likely to injure a choice individual style, is the question better asked in suspense; it is not for asking until the signs render it nugatory. Mrs. Meynell's two paragraphs on 'The Honours of Mortality' imply that, if she has done her best in the work for the day, she is resigned to the

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common fate of workers for the day, like her prized exemplar, whose 'finest distinction it was to desire no differences, no remembrance, but loss among the innumerable forgotten.' The loftier aristocratic spirit travels by this road to democracy, if proudly or humbly it matters little. Authors 'writing for posterity' are figures for the caricaturist. Apparently we owe 'A Woman in Grey' to journalism, and the train of thought following her on her bicycle in Oxford Street seems worth handing down, however uncertain its descent. 'She had learnt to be content with her share—no more—in common security, and to be pleased with her part in common hope. . . . *To this courage* the woman in grey has attained with a spring,' etc. How closely the writer feels with her sisterhood and for the world of the time to come, is indicated in her thoughts upon the woman's gaining courage: "'Thou art my warrior," said Volumnia, "I help to frame thee." Shall a man inherit his mother's trick of speaking, or her habit and attitude, and not suffer something, against his wish, from her bequest of weakness, and something, against his heart, from her bequest of folly? From the legacies of an unlesioned mind a woman's heirs-male are not cut off in the Common Law of the generations of mankind. Brutus knew that the valour of Portia was settled upon his sons.'

The writer who does honour to journalism assists at least in salutary work, for which the honours of a delicate stylist may well be surrendered. The writer casting an irradiation on cheap daily things does an act of beneficence, and can consent to pass away with them. I have not seen any roughening or flattening

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of diction, or taint of limpidity; one slip only, and that can be excused as easily as effaced. Rather is it shown that service in this great school has added to fluency, and quickened the observation of the most penetrative eyes we have among us. There is less in the second book of the poise of the sentence on some costly expressive, and we have always literary English to beguile or command the reader. It will hardly be otherwise, where an exacting taste imposes the correspondent self-respect. The author of 'The New Lucian' is a journalist, and of as masterly a dicacity as when he gave us those classic dialogues. Other names could be cited. The writing that is thinking may be in constant exercise to any degree without injury while the physique is cheerful; and the writing to suit the day, and thinking upon demand, make a rallying harness for the capacities of the voluntary and able in service. One sees it to be good apprenticeship. But journalism is necessarily impressionist. An impressionist theatrical critic, for example, should have the 'Point of Honour' implanted in him animatingly if he is to do his duty to himself and to the public; and if, as Mrs. Meynell says, 'the point of honour is the simple secret of the few,' his office may tempt to the doings that call on force of soul to undo them subsequently in a frank palinode. Few have that either; so we behold the effects of a critic's moods, for one consequence, in the public indifference to criticism. Of the few who can recant handsomely, Mr. Archer is one; M. Jules Lemaître, the most competent of critics, is also one, as was shown in his amends to the Shade of Théodore de Banville the other day. He was an impressionist critic dogmatizing when he went wrong.

MRS. MEYNELL'S BOOKS OF ESSAYS

I could wish him to read Mrs. Meynell's article on the acting of Eleonora Duse. He might dissent; he would own that our English critic writes with knowledge of the art of acting, with sensitive perception. She examines, and gives her good reasons for pronouncing; she is not 'déterministe' or dogmatic, she is impressionist inasmuch as she is spiritually receptive. A reader of her criticism who had never seen Signora Duse on the stage, would conceive how the actress excels, though there is nothing pointed in the mention of the points. Those who have seen the great Italian are awakened by it to a better understanding of the art she illustrates and the grounds of her excellence. Great acting, great criticism: and both by reason of that quiescent, passionless, but not frigid, spiritual receptivity in study, from which issues the consummate representation, the right word upon it likewise.

Through all Mrs. Meynell's writings there is an avoidance of superlatives. Rarely does she indulge in an interjection. One may gather that she would disrelish the title bestowed by enraptured reviewers on exceptionally brilliant gifts; and it is battered enough. The power she has, and the charm it is clothed in, shall, then, be classed as distinction—the quality Matthew Arnold anxiously scanned the flats of earth to discover. It will serve as well as the more splendidly flashing and commoner term to specify her claim upon public attention: She has this distinction: the seizure of her theme, a fine dialectic, a pliable step, the feminine of strong good sense—equal, only sweeter,—and reflectiveness, humaneness, fervency of spirit. I can fancy Matthew Arnold, lighting on such essays as 'The Point of Honour,' 'A Point in

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Biography,' 'Symmetry and Incident,' and others that I have named, saying, with refreshment, 'She can write!' It does not seem to me too bold to imagine Carlyle listening, without the weariful gesture, to his wife's reading of the same, hearing them to the end, and giving his comment: 'That woman thinks!' A woman who thinks and who can write, who does not disdain the school of journalism, and who brings novelty and poetic beauty, the devout but open mind, to her practice of it, bears promise that she will some day rank as one of the great Englishwomen of Letters, at present counting humbly by computation beside their glorious French sisters in the art.

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A PAUSE IN THE STRIFE¹

Our 'Eriniad,' or ballad epic of the enfranchisement of the sister island is closing its first fytte for the singer, and with such result as those Englishmen who have some knowledge of their fellows foresaw. There are sufficient reasons why the Tories should always be able to keep together, but let them have the credit of cohesiveness and subordination to control. Though working for their own ends, they won the esteem of their allies, which will count for them in the struggles to follow. Their leaders appear to have seen what has not been distinctly perceptible to the opposite party—that the break up of the Liberals means the defection of the old Whigs in permanence, heralding the establishment of a powerful force against Radicalism, with a capital cry to the country. They have tactical astuteness. If they seem rather too proud of their victory, it is merely because, as becomes them, they do not look ahead. To rejoice in the gaining of a day, without having clear views of the morrow, is puerile enough. Any Tory victory, it may be said, is little more than a pause in the strife, unless when the Radical game is played 'to dish the Whigs,' and the Tories are now fast bound down by their incorporation of the latter to abstain from the violent springs and

¹ 'Pall Mall Gazette,' July 9, 1886.

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right-about-facings of the Derby-Disraeli period. They are so heavily weighted by the new combination that their Jack-in-the-box, Lord Randolph, will have to stand like an ordinary sentinel on duty, and take the measurement of his natural size. They must, on the supposition of their entry into office, even to satisfy their own constituents, produce a scheme. Their majority in the House will command it.

To this extent, then, Mr. Gladstone has not been defeated. The question set on fire by him will never be extinguished until the combustible matter has gone to ashes. But personally he meets a sharp rebuff. The Tories may well raise hurrahs over that. Radicals have to admit it, and point to the grounds of it. Between a man's enemies and his friends there comes out a rough painting of his character, not without a resemblance to the final summary, albeit wanting in the justly delicate historical touch to particular features. On the one side he is abused as 'the one-man power'; lauded on the other for his marvellous intuition of the popular will. One can believe that he scarcely wishes to march dictatorially, and full surely his Egyptian policy was from step to step a misreading of the will of the English people. He went forth on this campaign with the finger of Egypt not ineffectively levelled against him a second time. Nevertheless he does read his English; he has, too, the fatal tendency to the bringing forth of Bills in the manner of Jove big with Minerva. He perceived the necessity, and the issue of the necessity; clearly defined what must come, and, with a higher motive than the vanity with which his enemies charge him, though not with such high counsel as Wisdom at his ear, fell to work on it

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alone, produced the whole Bill alone, and then handed it to his Cabinet to digest, too much in love with the thing he had laid and incubated to permit of any serious dismemberment of its frame. Hence the disruption. He worked for the future, produced a Bill for the future, and is wrecked in the present. Probably he can work in no other way than from the impulse of his enthusiasm, solitarily. It is a way of making men overweeningly in love with their creations. The consequence is likely to be that Ireland will get her full measure of justice to appease her cravings earlier than she would have had as much from the United Liberal Cabinet, but at a cost both to her and to England. Meanwhile we are to have a House of Commons incapable of conducting public business; the tradesmen to whom the 'Times' addressed pathetic condolences on the loss of their season will lose more than one; and we shall be made sensible that we have an enemy in our midst, until a people, slow to think, have taken counsel of their native generosity to put trust in the most generous race on earth.

CONCESSION TO THE CELT¹

Things are quiet outside an ant-hill until the stick has been thrust into it. Mr. Gladstone's Bill for helping to the wiser government of Ireland has brought forth our busy citizens on the top-rubble in traversing counter-swarms, and whatever may be said against a Bill that deals roughly with many sensitive interests, one asks whether anything less violently impressive would have roused industrious England to take this question at last into the mind, as a matter for settlement. The Liberal leader has driven it home; and wantonly, in the way of a pedestrian demagogue, some think; certainly to the discomposure of the comfortable and the myopely busy, who prefer to live on with a disease in the frame rather than at all be stirred. They can, we see, pronounce a positive electoral negative; yet even they, after the eighty and odd years of our domestic perplexity, in the presence of the eighty and odd members pledged for Home Rule, have been moved to excited inquiries regarding measures—short of the obnoxious Bill. How much we suffer from sniffing the vain incense of that word practical, is contempt of prevision! Many of the measures now being proposed responsively to the fretful cry for them, as a better alternative to correction by force of arms, are sound and just. Ten years back, or at a more recent period

¹ 'Fortnightly Review,' October 1886, New Series, vol. xl., p. 448.

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before Mr. Parnell's triumph in the number of his followers, they would have formed a basis for the appeasement of the troubled land. The institution of county boards, the abolition of the detested Castle, something like the establishment of a Royal residence in Dublin, would have begun the work well. Materially and sentimentally, they were the right steps to take. They are now proposed too late. They are regarded as petty concessions, insufficient and vexatious. The lower and the higher elements in the population are fused by the enthusiasm of men who find themselves marching in full body on a road, under a flag, at the heels of a trusted leader; and they will no longer be fed with sops. Petty concessions are signs of weakness to the unsatisfied; they prick an appetite, they do not close breaches. If our object is, as we hear it said, to appease the Irish, we shall have to give them the Parliament their leader demands. It might once have been much less; it may be worried into a raving, perhaps a desperate wrestling, for still more. Nations pay Sibylline prices for want of forethought. Mr. Parnell's terms are embodied in Mr. Gladstone's Bill, to which he and his band have subscribed. The one point for him is the statutory Parliament, so that Ireland may civilly govern herself; and standing before the world as representative of his country, he addresses an applauding audience when he cites the total failure of England to do that business of government, as at least a logical reason for the claim. England has confessedly failed; the world says it, the country admits it. We have failed, and not because the so-called Saxon is incapable of understanding the Celt, but owing to our system, suitable enough to us, of rule by Party, which

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puts perpetually a shifting hand upon the reins, and invites the clamour it has to allay. The Irish—the English too in some degree—have been taught that roaring, in its various forms, is the trick to open the ears of Ministers. We have encouraged by irritating them to practise it, until it has become a habit, an hereditary profession with them. Ministers in turn have defensively adopted the arts of beguilement, varied by an exercise of the police. We grew accustomed to periods of Irish fever. The exhaustion ensuing we named tranquillity, and hoped that it would bear fruit. But we did not plant. The Party in office directed its attention to what was uppermost and urgent—to that which kicked them. Although we were living, by common consent, with a disease in the frame, eruptive at intervals, a national disfigurement always a danger, the Ministerial idea of arresting it for the purpose of healing was confined, before the passing of Mr. Gladstone's well-meant Land Bill, to the occasional despatch of commissions; and, in fine, we behold through History the Irish malady treated as a form of British constitutional gout. Parliament touched on the Irish only when the Irish were active as a virus. Our later alternations of cajolery and repression bear painful resemblance to the nervous fit of ricketty riders compounding with their destinations that they may keep their seats. The cajolery was foolish, if an end was in view; the repression inefficient. To repress efficiently we have to stifle a conscience accusing us of old injustice, and forget that we are sworn to freedom. The cries that we have been hearing for Cromwell or for Bismarck prove the existence of an impatient faction in our midst fitter to

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wear the collars of those masters whom they invoke than to drop a vote into the ballot box. As for the prominent politicians who have displaced their rivals partly on the strength of an implied approbation of those cries, we shall see how they illumine the councils of a governing people. They are wiser than the barking dogs. Cromwell and Bismarck are great names; but the harrying of Ireland did not settle it, and to Germanize a Posen and call it peace will find echo only in the German tongue. Posen is the error of a master-mind too much given to hammer at obstacles. He has, however, the hammer. Can it be imagined in English hands? The braver exemplar for grappling with monstrous political tasks is Cavour, and he would not have hinted at the iron method or the bayonet for a pacification. Cavour challenged debate; he had faith in the active intellect, and that is the thing to be prayed for by statesmen who would register permanent successes. The Irish, it is true, do not conduct an argument coolly. Mr. Parnell and his eighty-five have not met the Conservative leader and his following in the Commons with the gravity of platonic disputants. But they have a logical position, equivalent to the best of arguments. They are representatives, they would say, of a country admittedly ill-governed by us; and they have accepted the Bill of the defeated Minister as final. Its provisions are their terms of peace. They offer in return for that boon to take the burden we have groaned under off our hands. If we answer that we think them insincere, we accuse these thrice accredited representatives of the Irish people of being hypocrites and crafty conspirators; and numbers in

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England, affected by the weapons they have used to get to their present strength, do think it; forgetful that our obtuseness to their constant appeals forced them into the extremer shifts of agitation. Yet it will hardly be denied that these men love Ireland; and they have not shown themselves by their acts to be insane. To suppose them conspiring for separation indicates a suspicion that they have neither hearts nor heads. For Ireland, separation is immediate ruin. It would prove a very short sail for these conspirators before the ship went down. The vital necessity of the Union for both countries, obviously for the weaker of the two, is known to them; and unless we resume our exasperation of the wild fellow the Celt can be made by such a process, we have not rational grounds for treating him, or treating with him, as a Bedlamite. He has besides his passions shrewd sense; and his passions may be rightly directed by benevolent attraction. This is language derided by the victorious enemy; it speaks nevertheless what the world, and even troubled America, thinks of the Irish Celt. More of it now on our side of the Channel would be serviceable. The notion that he hates the English comes of his fevered chafing against the harness of England, and when subject to his fevers, he is unrestrained in his cries and deeds. That pertains to the nature of him. Of course, if we have no belief in the virtues of friendliness and confidence—none in regard to the Irishman—we show him his footing, and we challenge the issue. For the sole alternative is distinct antagonism, a form of war. Mr. Gladstone's Bill has brought us to that definite line. Ireland having given her adhesion to it, swearing that she does so in good

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faith, and will not accept a smaller quantity, peace is only to be had by our placing trust in the Irish; we trust them or we crush them. Intermediate ways are but the prosecution of our ugly flounderings in Bogland; and dubious as we see the choice on either side, a decisive step to right or left will not show us to the world so bemired, to ourselves so miserably inefficient, as we appear in this session of a new Parliament. With his eighty-five, apart from external operations lawful or not, Mr. Parnell can act as a sort of *lumbricus* in the House. Let journalists watch and chronicle events: if Mr. Gladstone has humour, they will yet note a peculiar smile on his closed mouth from time to time when the alien body within the House, from which, for the sake of its dignity and ability to conduct its affairs, he would have relieved it till the day of a warmer intelligence between Irish and English, paralyzes our machinery of business. An ably-handled coherent body in the midst of the liquid groups will make it felt that Ireland is a nation, naturally dependent though she must be. We have to do with forces in politics, and the great majority of the Irish Nationalists in Ireland has made them a force.

No doubt Mr. Matthew Arnold is correct in his apprehensions of the dangers we may fear from a Dublin House of Commons. The declarations and novel or ultra theories might almost be written down beforehand. I should, for my part, anticipate a greater danger in the familiar attitude of the English metropolitan Press and public toward an experiment they dislike and incline to dread:—the cynical comments, the quotations between inverted commas, the com-

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miserating shrug, cold irony, raw banter, growl of menace, sharp snap, rounds of laughter. Frenchmen of the Young Republic, not presently appreciated as offensive, have had some of these careless trifles translated for them, and have been stung. We favoured Germany with them now and then, before Germany became the first power in Europe. Before America had displayed herself as greatest among the giants that do not go to pieces, she had, as Americans forgivingly remember, without mentioning, a series of flicks of the whip. It is well to learn manners without having them imposed on us. There are various ways for tripping the experiment. Nevertheless, when the experiment is tried, considering that our welfare is involved in its not failing, as we have failed, we should prepare to start it cordially, cordially assist it. Thoughtful political minds regard the measure as a backward step; yet conceiving but a prospect that a measure accepted by Home Rulers will possibly enable the Irish and English to step together, it seems better worth the venture than to pursue a course of prospectless discord. Whatever we do or abstain from doing has now its evident dangers, and this being imminent may appear the larger of them; but if a weighing of the conditions dictates it, and conscience approves, the wiser proceeding is to make trial of the untried. Our outlook was preternaturally black, with enormous increase of dangers when the originator of our species venturesomely arose from the posture of the *quatre pattes*. We consider that we have not lost by his temerity. In states of dubitation under impelling elements, the instinct pointing to courageous action is, besides the manlier, conjecturably the right one.

LESLIE STEPHEN¹

When that noble body of scholarly and cheerful pedestrians, the Sunday Tramps, were on the march, with Leslie Stephen to lead them, there was conversation which would have made the presence of a shorthand writer a benefaction to the country. A pause to it came at the examination of the leader's watch and Ordnance map under the western sun, and word was given for the strike across country to catch the tail of a train offering dinner in London, at the cost of a run through hedges, over ditches and fallows, past proclamation against trespassers, under suspicion of being taken for more serious depredators in flight. The chief of the Tramps had a wonderful calculating eye in the observation of distances and the nature of the land, as he proved by his discovery of untried passes in the higher Alps, and he had no mercy for porsy followers. I have often said of this life-long student and philosophical head that he had in him the making of a great military captain. He would not have been opposed to the profession of arms if he had been captured early for the service, notwithstanding his abomination of bloodshed. He had a high, calm courage, was unperturbed in a dubious position, and would confidently take the way out of it which he conceived to be the better.

¹ Reprinted by permission from 'The Author,' April 1904.

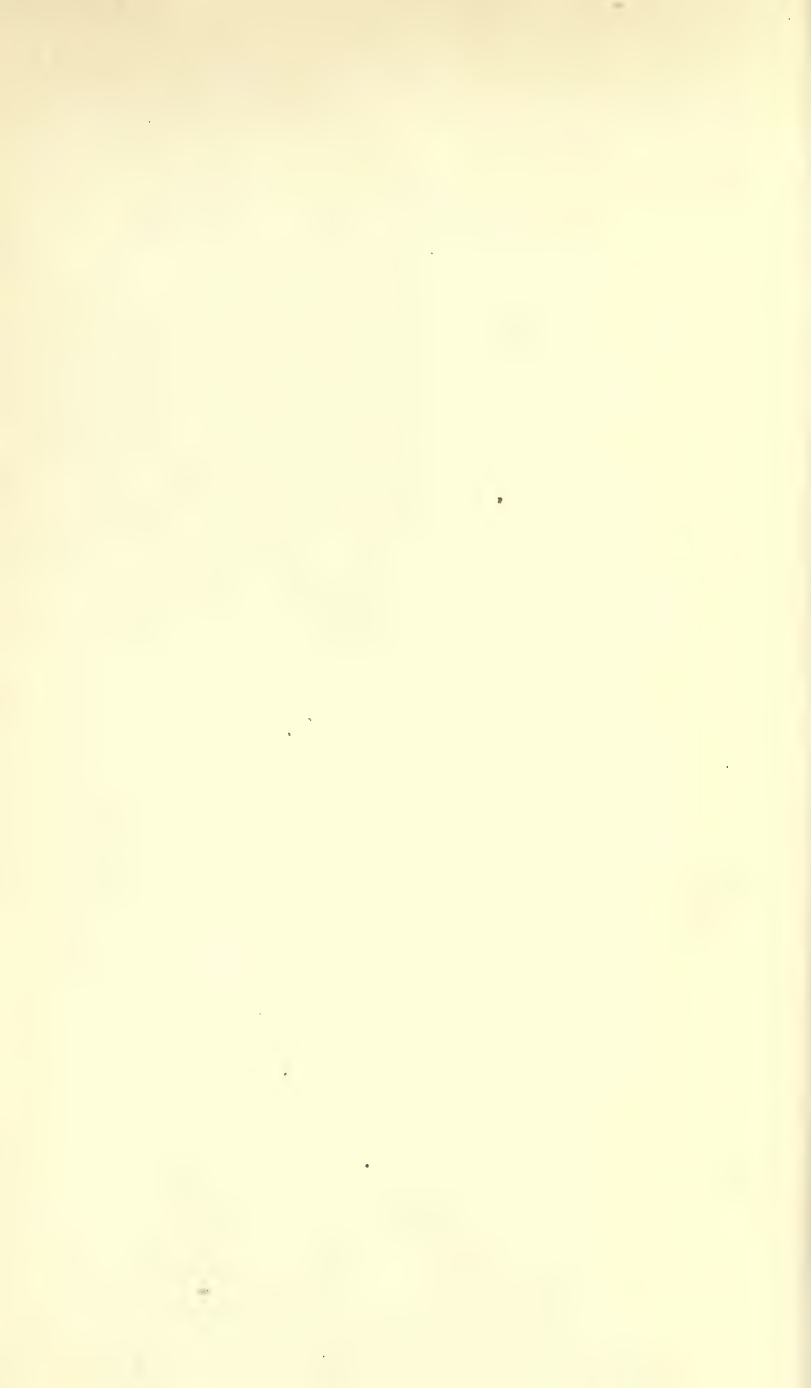
SHORT ARTICLES

We have not to deplore that he was diverted from the ways of a soldier, though England, as the country has been learning of late, cannot boast of many in uniform who have capacity for leadership. His work in literature will be reviewed by his lieutenant of Tramps, one of the ablest of writers.¹ The memory of it remains with us, as being the profoundest and the most sober criticism we have had in our time. The only sting in it was an inoffensive humorous irony that now and then stole out for a roll over, like a furry cub, or the occasional ripple on a lake in grey weather. We have nothing left that is like it.

One might easily fall into the pit of panegyric by an enumeration of his qualities, personal and literary. It would not be out of harmony with the temper and characteristics of a mind so equable. He, the equable, whether in condemnation or eulogy. Our loss of such a man is great, for work was in his brain, and the hand was active till close upon the time when his breathing ceased. The loss to his friends can be replaced only by an imagination that conjures him up beside them. That will be no task to those who have known him well enough to see his view of things as they are, and revive his expression of it. With them he will live despite the word farewell.

¹ The late Frederic W. Maitland.

CRITICISM



CRITICISM

FINE PASSAGES IN VERSE AND PROSE: Selected
by Living Men of Letters¹

Mr. George Meredith writes:—

‘The 24th “Iliad” contains the highest reaches in poetry. So many will refer to it that I do not swell the list.

‘In modern English verse I would cite for excellence Keats’s “Ode to a Grecian Urn,” and “Ode to Autumn”; Tennyson’s “Ænone”; the “Kubla Khan” of Coleridge.’

Mr. Meredith gives the whole of the second scene in the fourth act of Shakespeare’s Henry VIII., but picks out the following passages therein as the finest:—

‘KATHARINE

After my death I wish no other herald,
No other speaker of my living actions,
To keep mine honour from corruption,
But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.
Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,
With thy religious truth and modesty,
Now in his ashes honour: Peace be with him!—
Patience, be near me still; and set me lower:
I have not long to trouble thee.—Good Griffith,
Cause the musicians play me that sad note
I named my knell, whilst I sit meditating
On that celestial harmony I go to.

Sad and Solemn Music

¹ The ‘Fortnightly Review,’ August 1887.

CRITICISM

KATHARINE

Sir, I most humbly pray you to deliver
This to my lord the king.

CAPUCIUS

Most willing, madam.

KATHARINE

In which I have commended to his goodness
The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter :—
The dews of heaven fall thick in blessings on her !—
Beseeching him to give her virtuous breeding ;
(She is young, and of a noble modest nature ;
I hope she will deserve well ;) and a little
To love her for her mother's sake, that lov'd him,
Heaven knows how dearly. My next poor petition
Is that his noble grace would have some pity
Upon my wretched women, that so long
Have follow'd both my fortunes faithfully :
Of which there is not one, I dare avow,
(And now I should not lie), but will deserve,
For virtue, and true beauty of the soul,
For honesty, and decent carriage,
A right good husband, let him be a noble ;
And, sure, those men are happy that shall have them.
The last is, for my men ;—they are the poorest,
But poverty could never draw them from me ;—
That they may have their wages duly paid them,
And something over to remember me by ;
If heaven had pleas'd to have given me longer life,
And able means, we had not parted thus.
These are the whole contents :—And, good my lord,
By that you love the dearest in this world,
As you wish Christian peace to souls departed,
Stand these poor people's friend, and urge the king
To do me this last right.

CAPUCIUS

By heaven I will ;
Or let me lose the fashion of a man !

KATHARINE

I thank you, honest lord. Remember me
In all humility unto his highness :
Say, his long trouble now is passing

FINE PASSAGES IN VERSE AND PROSE

Out of this world : tell him, in death I bless'd him,
For so I will.—Mine eyes grow dim.—Farewell,
My lord.—Griffith farewell.—Nay, Patience,
You must not leave me yet. I must to bed ;
Call in more women.—When I am dead, good wench,
Let me be us'd with honour ; strew me over
With maiden flowers, that all the world may know
I was a chaste wife to my grave : embalm me,
Then lay me forth : although unqueened, yet like
A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me,
I can no more. *[Exeunt, leading Katharine.]*

Further, Mr. Meredith gives the passage from Virgil's
'Æneid,' Book 4, known as Dido's Lament.

In prose Mr. Meredith gives Hamlet's speech to the
players, which is too well known to need quotation,
and also the following passage from 'Villette,' cap. 23,
in which Charlotte Brontë describes the great French
actress, Rachel, under the title of 'Vashti':—

"CHARLOTTE BRONTË.—'VILLETTE'"

'Suffering had struck that stage empress ; and she
stood before her audience neither yielding to, nor
enduring, nor, in finite measure, resenting it ; she
stood locked in struggle, rigid in resistance. She
stood, not dressed, but draped in pale antique folds,
long and regular like sculpture. A background and
entourage and flooring of deepest crimson threw her
out, white like alabaster—like silver : rather, be it
said, like Death.

'Where was the artist of the Cleopatra ? Let him
come and sit down and study this different vision.
Let him seek here the mighty brawn, the muscle, the
abounding blood, the full-fed flesh he worshipped : let
all materialists draw nigh and look on.

CRITICISM

'I have said that she does not *resent* her grief. No; the weakness of that word would make it a lie. To her, what hurts becomes immediately embodied: she looks on it as a thing that can be attacked, worried down, torn in shreds. Scarcely a substance herself, she grapples to conflict with abstractions. Before calamity she is a tigress; she rends her woes, shivers them in convulsed abhorrence. Pain, for her, has no result in good: tears water no harvest of wisdom: on sickness, on death itself, she looks with the eyes of a rebel. Wicked, perhaps she is, but also she is strong; and her strength has conquered Beauty, has overcome Grace, and bound both at her side, captives peerlessly fair, and docile as fair. Even in the uttermost frenzy of energy is each mænad movement royally, imperially, incedingly upborne. Her hair, flying loose in revel or war, is still an angel's hair, and glorious under a halo. Fallen, insurgent, banished, she remembers the heaven where she rebelled. Heaven's light, following her exile, pierces its confines, and discloses their forlorn remoteness.'

Further, Mr. George Meredith gives the passage in the 'Mémoires' of Saint-Simon which describes the character of the Regent Orléans.

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SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY

CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY

LETTERS WRITTEN TO THE 'MORNING POST' FROM THE SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY

From our own Correspondent

Ferrara, June 22, 1866.

Before this letter reaches London the guns will have awakened both the echo of the old river Po and the classical Mincio. The whole of the troops, about 110,000 men, with which Cialdini intends to force the passage of the first-named river are already massed along the right bank of the Po, anxiously waiting that the last hour of to-morrow should strike, and that the order for action should be given. The telegraph will have already informed your readers that, according to the intimation sent by General Lamarmora on Tuesday evening to the Austrian headquarters, the three days fixed by the general's message before beginning hostilities will expire at twelve p.m. of the 23rd of June.

Cialdini's headquarters have been established in this city since Wednesday morning, and the famous general, in whom the fourth corps he commands, and the whole of the nation, has so much confidence, has concentrated the whole of his forces within a comparatively narrow compass, and is ready for action. I believe therefore that by to-morrow the right bank of the Po will be connected with the

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mainland of the Polesine by several pontoon bridges, which will enable Cialdini's *corps d'armée* to cross the river, and, as everybody here hopes, to cross it in spite of any defence the Austrians may make.

On my way to this ancient city last evening I met General Cadogan and two superior Prussian officers, who by this time must have joined Victor Emmanuel's headquarters at Cremona; if not, they have been by this time transferred elsewhere, more on the front, towards the line of the Mincio, on which, according to appearance, the first, second, and third Italian *corps d'armée* seem destined to operate. The English general and the two Prussian officers above mentioned are to follow the king's staff, the first as English commissioner, the superior in rank of the two others in the same capacity.

I have been told here that, before leaving Bologna, Cialdini held a general council of the commanders of the seven divisions of which his powerful *corps d'armée* is formed, and that he told them that, in spite of the forces the enemy has massed on the left bank of the Po, between the point which faces Stellata and Rovigo, the river must be crossed by his troops, whatever might be the sacrifice this important operation requires. Cialdini is a man who knows how to keep his word, and, for this reason, I have no doubt he will do what he has already made up his mind to accomplish. I am therefore confident that before two or three days have elapsed, these 110,000 Italian troops, or a great part of them, will have trod, for the Italians, the sacred land of Venetia.

Once the river Po crossed by Cialdini's *corps d'armée*, he will boldly enter the Polesine and make himself

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master of the road which leads by Rovigo towards Este and Padua. A glance at the map will show your readers how, at about twenty or thirty miles from the first-mentioned town, a chain of hills, called the Colli Euganei, stretches itself from the last spur of the Julian Alps, in the vicinity of Vicenza, gently sloping down towards the sea. As this line affords good positions for contesting the advance of an army crossing the Po at Lago Scuro, or at any other point not far from it, it is to be supposed that the Austrians will make a stand there, and I should not be surprised at all that Cialdini's first battle, if accepted by the enemy, should take place within that comparatively narrow ground which is within Montagnana, Este, Terradura, Abano, and Padua. It is impossible to suppose that Cialdini's *corps d'armée*, being so large, is destined to cross the Po only at one point of the river below its course: it is extremely likely that part of it should cross it at some point above, between Revere and Stellata, where the river is in two or three instances only 450 metres wide. Were the Italian general to be successful—protected as he will be by the tremendous fire of the powerful artillery he disposes of—in these twofold operations, the Austrians defending the line of the Colli Euganei could be easily outflanked by the Italian troops, who would have crossed the river below Lago Scuro. Of course these are mere suppositions, for nobody, as you may imagine, except the king, Cialdini himself, Lamarmora, Pettiti, and Menabrea, is acquainted with the plan of the forthcoming campaign. There was a rumour at Cialdini's headquarters to-day that the Austrians had gathered in great numbers in the Polesine, and

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especially at Rovigo, a small town which they have strongly fortified of late, with an apparent design to oppose the crossing of the Po, were Cialdini to attempt it at or near Lago Scuro. There are about Rovigo large tracts of marshes and fields cut by ditches and brooks, which, though owing to the dryness of the season [they] cannot be, as it was generally believed two weeks ago, easily inundated, yet might well aid the operations the Austrians may undertake in order to check the advance of the Italian fourth *corps d'armée*. The resistance to the undertaking of Cialdini may be, on the part of the Austrians, very stout, but I am almost certain that it will be overcome by the ardour of Italian troops, and by the skill of their illustrious leader.

As I told you above, the declaration of war was handed over to an Austrian major for transmission to Count Stancowick, the Austrian governor of Mantua, on the evening of the 19th, by Colonel Bariola, *sous-chef* of the general staff, who was accompanied by the Duke Luigi of Sant' Arpino, the husband of the amiable widow of Lord Burghersh. The duke is the eldest son of Prince San Teodoro, one of the wealthiest noblemen of Naples. In spite of his high position and of his family ties, the Duke of Sant' Arpino, who is well known in London fashionable society, entered as a volunteer in the Italian army, and was appointed orderly officer to General Lamarmora. The choice of such a gentleman for the mission I am speaking of was apparently made with intention, in order to show the Austrians that the Neapolitan nobility is as much interested in the national movement as the middle and lower classes of the Kingdom, once so

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fearfully misruled by the Bourbons. The Duke of Sant' Arpino is not the only Neapolitan nobleman who has enlisted in the Italian army since the war with Austria broke out. In order to show you the importance which must be given to this *pronunciamiento* of the Neapolitan noblemen, allow me to give you here a short list of the names of those of them who have enlisted as private soldiers in the cavalry regiments of the regular army: The Duke of Policastro; the Count of Savignano Guevara, the eldest son of the Duke of Bovino; the Duke d'Ozia d'Angri, who had emigrated in 1860, and returned to Naples six months ago; Marquis Rivadebro Serra; Marquis Pisicelli, whose family had left Naples in 1860 out of devotion to Francis II.; two Carraciolos, of the historical family from which sprung the unfortunate Neapolitan admiral of this name, whose head Lord Nelson would have done better not to have sacrificed to the cruelty of Queen Caroline; Prince Carini, the representative of an illustrious family of Sicily, a nephew of the Marquis del Vasto; and Pescara, a descendant of that great general of Charles V., to whom the proud Francis I. of France was obliged to surrender and give up his sword at the battle of Pavia. Besides these Neapolitan noblemen who have enlisted of late as privates, the Italian army now encamped on the banks of the Po and of the Mincio may boast of two Colonnas, a prince of Somma, two Barons Renzi, an Acquaviva, of the Duke of Atri, two Capece, two Princes Buttera, etc. To return to the mission of Colonel Bariola and the Duke of Sant' Arpino, I will add some details which were told me this morning by a gentleman who left Cremona

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yesterday evening, and who had them from a reliable source. The messenger of General Lamarmora had been directed to proceed from Cremona to the small village of Le Grazie, which, on the line of the Mincio, marks the Austrian and Italian frontier.

On the right bank of the Lake of Mantua, in the year 1340, stood a small chapel containing a miraculous painting of the Madonna, called by the people of the locality 'Santa Maria delle Grazie.' The boatmen and fishermen of the Mincio, who had been, as they said, often saved from certain death by the Madonna—as famous in those days as the modern Lady of Rimini, celebrated for the startling feat of winking her eyes—determined to erect for her a more worthy abode. Hence arose the Santuario delle Grazie. Here, as at Loretto and other holy localities of Italy, a fair is held, in which, amongst a great number of worldly things, rosaries, holy images, and other miraculous objects are sold, and astounding boons are said to be secured at the most trifling expense. The Santuario della Madonna delle Grazie enjoying a far-spread reputation, the dumb, deaf, blind, and halt—in short, people afflicted with all sorts of infirmities—flock thither during the fair, and are not wanting even on the other days of the year. The church of Le Grazie is one of the most curious of Italy. Not that there is anything remarkable in its architecture, for it is an Italian Gothic structure of the simplest style. But the ornamental part of the interior is most peculiar. The walls of the building are covered with a double row of wax statues, of life size, representing a host of warriors, cardinals, bishops, kings, and popes, who—as the story runs—pretended to have received some wonderful grace

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during their earthly existence. Amongst the grand array of illustrious personages, there are not a few humbler individuals whose history is faithfully told (if you choose to credit it) by the painted inscriptions below. There is even a convict, who, at the moment of being hanged, implored succour of the all-powerful Madonna, whereupon the beam of the gibbet instantly broke, and the worthy individual was restored to society—a very doubtful benefit after all. On Colonel Bariola and the Duke of Sant' Arpino arriving at this place, which is only five miles distant from Mantua, their carriage was naturally stopped by the *commissaire* of the Austrian police, whose duty was to watch the frontier. Having told him that they had a despatch to deliver either to the military governor of Mantua or to some officer sent by him to receive it, the *commissaire* at once despatched a mounted *gendarme* to Mantua. Two hours had scarcely elapsed when a carriage drove into the village of Le Grazie, from which an Austrian major of infantry alighted and hastened to a wooden hut where the two Italian officers were waiting. Colonel Bariola, who was trained in the Austrian military school of Viller Nashstad, and regularly left the Austrian service in 1848, acquainted the newly-arrived major with his mission, which was that of delivering the sealed despatch to the general in command of Mantua and receiving for it a regular receipt. The despatch was addressed to the Archduke Albert, commander-in-chief of the Austrian army of the South, care of the governor of Mantua. After the major had delivered the receipt, the three messengers entered into a courteous conversation, during which Colonel Bariola seized an opportunity of presenting the duke,

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purposely laying stress on the fact of his belonging to one of the most illustrious families of Naples. It happened that the Austrian major had also been trained in the same school where Colonel Bariola was brought up—a circumstance of which he was reminded by the Austrian officer himself. Three hours had scarcely elapsed from the arrival of the two Italian messengers of war at Le Grazie, on the Austrian frontier, when they were already on their way back to the headquarters of Cremona, where during the night the rumour was current that a telegram had been received by Lamarmora from Verona, in which Archduke Albert accepted the challenge. Victor Emmanuel, whom I saw at Bologna yesterday, arrived at Cremona in the morning at two o'clock, but by this time his Majesty's headquarters must have removed more towards the front, in the direction of the Oglio. I should not be at all surprised were the Italian headquarters to be established by to-morrow either at Piubega or Gazzoldo, if not actually at Goito, a village, as you know, which marks the Italian-Austrian frontier on the Mincio. The whole of the first, second, and third Italian *corps d'armée* are by this time concentrated within that comparatively narrow space which lies between the position of Castiglione, Delle Stiviere, Lorrato, and Desenzano, on the Lake of Garda, and Solferino on one side; Piubega, Gazzoldo, Sacca, Goito, and Castellucchio on the other. Are these three *corps d'armée* to attack when they hear the roar of Cialdini's artillery on the right bank of the Po? Are they destined to force the passage of the Mincio either at Goito or at Borghetto? or are they destined to invest Verona, storm Peschiera, and lay siege to Mantua? This is

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more than I can tell you, for, I repeat it, the intentions of the Italian leaders are enveloped in a veil which nobody—the Austrians included—has as yet been able to penetrate. One thing, however, is certain, and it is this, that as the clock of Victor Emmanuel marks the last minute of the seventy-second hour fixed by the declaration delivered at Le Grazie on Wednesday by Colonel Bariola to the Austrian major, the fair land where Virgil was born and Tasso was imprisoned will be enveloped by a thick cloud of the smoke of hundreds and hundreds of cannon. Let us hope that God will be in favour of right and justice, which, in this imminent and fierce struggle, is undoubtedly on the Italian side.

Cremona, June 30, 1866.

The telegraph will have already informed you of the concentration of the Italian army, whose headquarters have since Tuesday been removed from Redondesco to Piadena, the king having chosen the adjacent villa of Cigognolo for his residence. The concentrating movements of the royal army began on the morning of the 27th, *i.e.*, three days after the bloody *fait d'armes* of the 24th, which, narrated and commented on in different manners according to the interests and passions of the narrators, still remains for many people a mystery. At the end of this letter you will see that I quote a short phrase with which an Austrian major, now prisoner of war, portrayed the results of the fierce struggle fought beyond the Mincio. This officer is one of the few survivors of a regiment of Austrian volunteers, uhlands, two squadrons of

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which he himself commanded. The declaration made by this officer was thoroughly explicit, and conveys the exact idea of the valour displayed by the Italians in that terrible fight. Those who incline to overrate the advantages obtained by the Austrians on Sunday last must not forget that if Lamarmora had thought proper to persist in holding the positions of Valleggio, Volta, and Goito, the Austrians could not have prevented him. It seems the Austrian general-in-chief shared this opinion, for, after his army had carried with terrible sacrifices the positions of Monte Vento and Custozza, it did not appear, nor indeed did the Austrians then give any signs, that they intended to adopt a more active system of warfare. It is the business of a commander to see that after a victory the fruit of it should not be lost, and for this reason the enemy is pursued and molested, and time is not left him for reorganisation. Nothing of this happened after the 24th—nothing has been done by the Austrians to secure such results. The frontier which separates the two dominions is now the same as it was on the eve of the declaration of war. At Goito, at Monzambano, and in the other villages of the extreme frontier, the Italian authorities are still discharging their duties. Nothing is changed in those places, were we to except that now and then an Austrian cavalry party suddenly makes its appearance, with the only object of watching the movements of the Italian army. One of these parties, formed by four squadrons of the Würtemberg hussar regiment, having advanced at six o'clock this morning on the right bank of the Mincio, met the fourth squadron of the Italian lancers of Foggia and were beaten back,

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and compelled to retire in disorder towards Goito and Rivolta. In this unequal encounter the Italian lancers distinguished themselves very much, made some Austrian hussars prisoners, and killed a few more, amongst whom was an officer. The same state of thing prevails at Rivottella, a small village on the shores of the Lake of Garda, about four miles distant from the most advanced fortifications of Peschiera. There, as elsewhere, some Austrian parties advanced with the object of watching the movements of the Garibaldians, who occupy the hilly ground, which from Castiglione, Eseuta, and Castel Venzago stretches to Lonato, Salo, and Desenzano, and to the mountain passes of Caffaro. In the last-named place the Garibaldians came to blows with the Austrians on the morning of the 28th, and the former got the best of the fray. Had the *fait d'armes* of the 24th, or the battle of Custozza, as Archduke Albrecht calls it, been a great victory for the Austrians, why should the imperial army remain in such inaction? The only conclusion we must come to is simply this, that the Austrian losses have been such as to induce the commander-in-chief of the army to act prudently on the defensive. We are now informed that the charges of cavalry which the Austrian lancers and the Hungarian hussars had to sustain near Villafranca on the 24th with the Italian horsemen of the Aosta and Alessandria regiments have been so fatal to the former that a whole division of the Kaiser cavalry must be reorganised before it can be brought into the field again. The regiment of Haller hussars and two of volunteer uhlans were almost destroyed in that terrible charge. To give you an idea of this cavalry

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encounter, it is sufficient to say that Colonel Vandoni, at the head of the Aosta regiment he commands, charged fourteen times during the short period of four hours. The volunteer uhlans of the Kaiser regiment had already given up the idea of breaking through the square formed by the battalion, in the centre of which stood Prince Humbert of Savoy, when they were suddenly charged and literally cut to pieces by the Alessandria light cavalry, in spite of the long lances they carried. This weapon and the loose uniform they wear makes them resemble the Cossacks of the Don. There is one circumstance, which, if I am not mistaken, has not as yet been published by the newspapers, and it is this. There was a fight on the 25th on a place at the north of Roverbella, between the Italian regiment of Novara cavalry and a regiment of Hungarian hussars, whose name is not known. This regiment was so thoroughly routed by the Italians that it was pursued as far as Villafranca, and had two squadrons put *hors de combat*, whilst the Novara regiment only lost twenty-four mounted men. I think it right to mention this, for it proves that, the day after the bloody affair of the 24th, the Italian army had still a regiment of cavalry operating at Villafranca, a village which lay at a distance of fifteen kilometres from the Italian frontier.

A report, which is much accredited here, explains how the Italian army did not derive the advantages it might have derived from the action of the 24th. It appears that the orders issued from the Italian headquarters during the previous night, and especially the verbal instructions given by Lamarmora and Pettiti to the staff officers of the different army corps, were either

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forgotten or misunderstood by those officers. Those sent to Durando, the commander of the first corps, seem to have been as follows: That he should have marched in the direction of Castelnuovo, without, however, taking part in the action. Durando, it is generally stated, had strictly adhered to the orders sent from the headquarters, but it seems that General Cerale understood them too literally. Having been ordered to march on Castelnuovo, and finding the village strongly held by the Austrians, who received his division with a tremendous fire, he at once engaged in the action instead of falling back on the reserve of the first corps and waiting new instructions. If such was really the case, it is evident that Cerale thought that the order to march which he had received implied that he was to attack and get possession of Castelnuovo, had this village, as it really was, already been occupied by the enemy. In mentioning this fact I feel bound to observe that I write it under the most complete reserve, for I should be sorry indeed to charge General Cerale with having misunderstood such an important order.

I see that one of your leading contemporaries believes that it would be impossible for the king or Lamarmora to say what result they expected from their ill-conceived and worse-executed attempt. The result they expected is, I think, clear enough; they wanted to break through the quadrilateral and make their junction with Cialdini, who was ready to cross the Po during the night of the 24th. That the attempt was ill-conceived and worse-executed, neither your contemporary nor the public at large has, for the present, the right to conclude, for no one knows as

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yet but imperfectly the details of the terrible fight. What is certain, however, is that General Durando, perceiving that the Cerale division was lost, did all that he could to help it. Failing in this he turned to his two aides-de-camp and coolly said to them: 'Now, gentlemen, it is time for you to retire, for I have a duty to perform which is a strictly personal one—the duty of dying.' On saying these words he galloped to the front and placed himself at about twenty paces from a battalion of Austrian sharp-shooters which were ascending the hill. In less than five minutes his horse was killed under him, and he was wounded in the right hand. I scarcely need add that his aides-de-camp did not flinch from sharing Durando's fate. They bravely followed their general, and one, the Marquis Corbetta, was wounded in the leg; the other, Count Esengrini, had his horse shot under him. I called on Durando, who is now at Milan, the day before yesterday. Though a stranger to him, he received me at once, and, speaking of the action of the 24th, he only said: 'I have the satisfaction of having done my duty. I wait tranquilly the judgement of history.'

Assuming, for argument's sake, that General Cerale misunderstood the orders he had received, and that, by precipitating his movement, he dragged into the same mistake the whole of Durando's corps—assuming, I say, this to be the right version, you can easily explain the fact that neither of the two contending parties are as yet in a position clearly to describe the action of the 24th. Why did neither the one nor the other display and bring into action the whole forces they could have had at their disposal? Why so many

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partial engagements at a great distance one from the other? In a word, why that want of unity, which, in my opinion, constituted the paramount characteristic of that bloody struggle? I may be greatly mistaken, but I am of opinion that neither the Italian general-in-chief nor the Austrian Archduke entertained on the night of the 23rd the idea of delivering a battle on the 24th. There, and only there, lies the whole mystery of the affair. The total want of unity of action on the part of the Italians assured to the Austrians, not the victory, but the chance of rendering impossible Lamarmora's attempt to break through the quadrilateral. This no one can deny; but, on the other hand, if the Italian army failed in attaining its object, the failure—owing to the bravery displayed both by the soldiers and by the generals—was far from being a disastrous or irreparable one. The Italians fought from three o'clock in the morning until nine in the evening like lions, showing to their enemies and to Europe that they know how to defend their country, and that they are worthy of the noble enterprise they have undertaken.

But let me now register one of the striking episodes of that memorable day. It was five o'clock p.m. when General Bixio, whose division held an elevated position not far from Villafranca, was attacked by three strong Austrian brigades, which had debouched at the same time from three different roads, supported with numerous artillery. An officer of the Austrian staff, waving a white handkerchief, was seen galloping towards the front of Bixio's position, and, once in the presence of this general, bade him surrender. Those who are not personally acquainted with Bixio cannot

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form an idea of the impression this bold demand must have made on him. I have been told that, on hearing the word 'surrender,' his face turned suddenly pale, then flashed like purple, and darting at the Austrian messenger, said, 'Major, if you dare to pronounce once more the word surrender in my presence, I tell you—and Bixio always keeps his word—that I will have you shot at once.' The Austrian officer had scarcely reached the general who had sent him, than Bixio, rapidly moving his division, fell with such impetuosity on the Austrian column, which were ascending the hill, that they were thrown pell-mell in the valley, causing the greatest confusion amongst their reserve. Bixio himself led his men, and with his aides-de-camp, Cavaliere Filippo Fermi, Count Martini, and Colonel Malenchini, all Tuscans, actually charged the enemy. I have been told that, on hearing this episode, Garibaldi said, 'I am not at all surprised, for Bixio is the best general I have made.' Once the enemy was repulsed, Bixio was ordered to manœuvre so as to cover the backward movement of the army, which was orderly and slowly retiring on the Mincio. Assisted by the co-operation of the heavy cavalry, commanded by General Count de Sonnaz, Bixio covered the retreat, and during the night occupied Goito, a position which he held till the evening of the 27th.

In consequence of the concentrating movement of the Italian army which I have mentioned at the beginning of this letter, the fourth army corps (Cialdini's) still holds the line of the Po. If I am rightly informed, the decree for the formation of the fourth army corps was signed by the king yesterday. This corps is that of Garibaldi, and is about 40,000 strong. An officer

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who has just returned from Milan told me this morning that he had had an opportunity of speaking with the Austrian prisoners sent from Milan to the fortress of Finestrelle in Piedmont. Amongst them was an officer of a uhlan regiment, who had all the appearance of belonging to some aristocratic family of Austrian Poland. Having been asked if he thought Austria had really gained the battle on the 24th, he answered: 'I do not know if the illusions of the Austrian army go so far as to induce it to believe it has obtained a victory—I do not believe it. He who loves Austria cannot, however, wish she should obtain such victories, for they are the victories of Pyrrhus.'

Headquarters, Eleventh Division,
Bozzolo, July 3, 1866.

There is at Verona some element in the Austrian councils of war which we don't understand, but which gives to their operations in this present phase of the campaign just as uncertain and as vacillating a character as it possessed during the campaign of 1859. On Friday they are still beyond the Mincio, and on Saturday their small fleet on the Lake of Garda steams up to Desenzano, and opens fire against this defenceless city and her railway station, whilst two battalions of Tyrolese sharpshooters occupy the building. On Sunday they retire, but early yesterday they cross the Mincio, at Goito and Monzambano, and begin to throw two bridges over the same river, between the last-named place and the mills of Volta. At the same time they erect batteries at Goito, Torrione, and Valeggio, pushing their reconnoitring parties of hussars as far

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as Medole, Castiglione delle Stiviere, and Montechiara, this last-named place being only at a distance of twenty miles from Brescia. Before this news reached me here this morning I was rather inclined to believe that they were playing at hide-and-seek, in the hope that the leaders of the Italian army should be tempted by the game and repeat, for the second time, the too hasty attack on the quadrilateral. This news, which I have from a reliable source, has, however, changed my former opinion, and I begin to believe that the Austrian Archduke has really made up his mind to come out from the strongholds of the quadrilateral, and intends actually to begin war on the very battle-fields where his imperial cousin was beaten on the 24th June 1859. It may be that the partial disasters sustained by Benedek in Germany have determined the Austrian Government to order a more active system of war against Italy, or, as is generally believed here, that the organisation of the commissariat was not perfect enough with the army Archduke Albert commands to afford a more active and offensive action. Be that as it may, the fact is that the news received here from several parts of Upper Lombardy seems to indicate, on the part of the Austrians, the intention of attacking their adversaries.

Yesterday whilst the peaceable village of Gazzoldo—five Italian miles from Goito—was still buried in the silence of night it was occupied by 400 hussars, to the great consternation of the people who were roused from their sleep by the galloping of their unexpected visitors. The sindaco, or mayor of the village, who is the chemist of the place, was, I hear, forcibly taken from his house and compelled to escort

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the Austrians on the road leading to Piubega and Redondesco. This worthy magistrate, who was not apparently endowed with sufficient courage to make at least half a hero, was so much frightened that he was taken ill, and still is in a very precarious condition. These inroads are not always accomplished with impunity, for last night, not far from Guidizzuolo, two squadrons of Italian light cavalry—Cavalleggieri di Lucca, if I am rightly informed—at a sudden turn of the road leading from the last-named village to Cerlongo, found themselves almost face to face with four squadrons of uhlans. The Italians, without numbering their foes, set spurs to their horses and fell like thunder on the Austrians, who, after a fight which lasted more than half an hour, were put to flight, leaving on the ground fifteen men *hors de combat*, besides twelve prisoners.

Whilst skirmishing of this kind is going on in the flat ground of Lombardy which lies between the Mincio and the Chiese, a more decisive action has been adopted by the Austrian corps which is quartered in the Italian Tyrol and Valtellina. A few days ago it was generally believed that the mission of this corps was only to oppose Garibaldi should he try to force those Alpine passes. But now we suddenly hear that the Austrians are already masters of Caffaro, Bagolino, Riccomassino, and Turano, which points they are fortifying. This fact explains the last movements made by Garibaldi towards that direction. But whilst the Austrians are massing their troops on the Tyrolese Alps the revolution is spreading fast in the more southern mountains of the Friuli and Cadorre, thus threatening the flank and rear of their army in

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Venetia. This revolutionary movement may not have as yet assumed great proportions, but as it is the effect of a plan proposed beforehand it might become really imposing, more so as the ranks of those Italian patriots are daily swollen by numerous deserters and refractory men of the Venetian regiments of the Austrian army.

Although the main body of the Austrians seems to be still concentrated between Peschiera and Verona, I should not wonder if they crossed the Mincio either to-day or to-morrow, with the object of occupying the heights of Volta, Cavriana, and Solferino, which, both by their position and by the nature of the ground, are in themselves so many fortresses. Supposing that the Italian army should decide for action—and there is every reason to believe that such will be the case—it is not unlikely that, as we had already a second battle at Custozza, we may have a second one at Solferino.

That at the Italian headquarters something has been decided upon which may hasten the forward movement of the army, I infer from the fact that the foreign military commissioners at the Italian headquarters, who, after the 24th June had gone to pass the leisure of their camp life at Cremona, have suddenly made their appearance at Torre Malamberti, a villa belonging to the Marquis Araldi, where Lamar-mora's staff is quartered. A still more important event is the presence of Baron Ricasoli, whom I met yesterday evening on coming here. The President of the Council was coming from Florence, and, after stopping a few hours at the villa of Cicognolo, where Victor Emmanuel and the royal household are staying, he drove to Torre Malamberti to confer with

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General Lamarmora and Count Pettiti. The presence of the baron at headquarters is too important an incident to be overlooked by people whose business is that of watching the course of events in this country. And it should be borne in mind that on his way to headquarters Baron Ricasoli stopped a few hours at Bologna, where he had a long interview with Cialdini. Nor is this all; for the most important fact I have to report to-day is, that whilst I am writing (five o'clock a.m.) three corps of the Italian army are crossing the Oglio at different points—all three acting together and ready for any occurrence. This *reconnaissance en force* may, as you see, be turned into a regular battle should the Austrians have crossed the Mincio with the main body of their army during the course of last night. You see that the air around me smells enough of powder to justify the expectation of events which are likely to exercise a great influence over the cause of right and justice—the cause of Italy.

Marcaria, July 3, Evening.

Murray's guide will save me the trouble of telling you what this little and dirty hole of Marcaria is like. The river Oglio runs due south, not far from the village, and cuts the road which from Bozzolo leads to Mantua. It is about seven miles from Castelluccio, a town which, since the peace of Villafranca, marked the Italian frontier in Lower Lombardy. Towards this last-named place marched this morning the eleventh division of the Italians under the command of General Angioletti, only a month ago Minister of the Marine in Lamarmora's Cabinet. Angioletti's division of the second corps was, in the case of an attack, to be sup-

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ported by the fourth and eighth, which had crossed the Oglio at Gazzuolo four hours before the eleventh had started from the place from which I am now writing. Two other divisions also moved in an oblique line from the upper course of the above-mentioned river, crossed it on a pontoon bridge, and were directed to maintain their communications with Angioletti's on the left, whilst the eighth and fourth would have formed its right. These five divisions were the *avant garde* of the main body of the Italian army. I am not in a position to tell you the exact line the army thus advancing from the Oglio has followed, but I have been told that, in order to avoid the possibility of repeating the errors which occurred in the action of the 24th, the three *corps d'armée* have been directed to march in such a manner as to enable them to present a compact mass should they meet the enemy. Contrary to all expectations, Angioletti's division was allowed to enter and occupy Castellucchio without firing a shot. As its vanguard reached the hamlet of Ospedaletto it was informed that the Austrians had left Castellucchio during the night, leaving a few hussars, who, in their turn, retired on Mantua as soon as they saw the cavalry Angioletti had sent to reconnoitre both the country and the borough of Castellucchio.

News has just arrived here that General Angioletti has been able to push his outposts as far as Rivolta on his left, and still further forward on his front towards Curtalone. Although the distance from Rivolta to Goito is only five miles, Angioletti, I have been told, could not ascertain whether the Austrians had crossed the Mincio in force.

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What part both Cialdini and Garibaldi will play in the great struggle nobody can tell. It is certain, however, that these two popular leaders will not be idle, and that a battle, if fought, will assume the proportions of an almost unheard of slaughter.

General Headquarters of the Italian Army,
Torre Malimberti, July 7, 1866.

Whilst the Austrian emperor throws himself at the feet of the ruler of France—I was almost going to write the arbiter of Europe—Italy and its brave army seem to reject disdainfully the idea of getting Venetia as a gift of a neutral power. There cannot be any doubt as to the feeling in existence since the announcement of the Austrian proposal by the *Moniteur* being one of astonishment, and even indignation so far as Italy herself is concerned. One hears nothing but expressions of this kind in whatever Italian town he may be, and the Italian army is naturally anxious that she should not be said to relinquish her task when Austrians speak of having beaten her, without proving that she can beat them too. There are high considerations of honour which no soldier or general would ever think of putting aside for humanitarian or political reasons, and with these considerations the Italian army is fully in accord since the 24th June. The way, too, in which the Kaiser chose to give up the long-contested point, by ignoring Italy and recognising France as a party to the Venetian question, created great indignation amongst the Italians, whose papers declare, one and all, that a fresh insult has been offered to the country. This is the state of

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public opinion here, and unless the greatest advantages are obtained by a premature armistice and a hurried treaty of peace, it is likely to continue the same, not to the entire security of public order in Italy. As a matter of course, all eyes are turned towards Villa Pallavicini, two miles from here, where the king is to decide upon either accepting or rejecting the French emperor's advice, both of which decisions are fraught with considerable difficulties and no little danger. The king will have sought the advice of his ministers, besides which that of Prussia will have been asked and probably given. The matter may be decided one way or the other in a very short time, or may linger on for days to give time for public anxiety and fears to be allayed and to calm down. In the meantime, it looks as if the king and his generals had made up their mind not to accept the gift. An attack on the Borgoforte *tête-de-pont* on the right side of the Po, began on 5th at half-past three in the morning, under the immediate direction of General Cialdini. The attacking corps was the Duke of Mignano's. All the day yesterday the gun was heard at Torre Malamberti, as it was also this morning between ten and eleven o' clock. Borgoforte is a fortress on the left side of the Po, throwing a bridge across this river, the right end of which is headed by a strong *tête-de-pont*, the object of the present attack. This work may be said to belong to the quadrilateral, as it is only an advanced part of the fortress of Mantua, which, resting upon its rear, is connected to Borgoforte by a military road supported on the Mantua side by the Pietolo fortress. The distance between Mantua and Borgoforte is only

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eleven kilometres. The *tête-de-pont* is thrown upon the Po; its structure is of recent date, and it consists of a central part and of two wings, called Rocchetta and Bocca di Ganda respectively. The lock here existing is enclosed in the Rocchetta work.

Since I wrote you my last letter Garibaldi has been obliged to desist from the idea of getting possession of Bagolino, Sant' Antonio, and Monte Suello, after a fight which lasted four hours, seeing that he had to deal with an entire Austrian brigade, supported by uhlans, sharpshooters (almost a battalion) and twelve pieces of artillery. These positions were subsequently abandoned by the enemy, and occupied by Garibaldi's volunteers. In this affair the general received a slight wound in his left leg, the nature of which, however, is so very trifling, that a few days will be enough to enable him to resume active duties. It seems that the arms of the Austrians proved to be much superior to those of the Garibaldians, whose guns did very bad service. The loss of the latter amounted to about 100 killed and 200 wounded, figures in which the officers appear in great proportion, owing to their having been always at the head of their men, fighting, charging, and encouraging their comrades throughout. Captain Adjutant-Major Battino, formerly of the regular army, died, struck by three bullets, while rushing on the Austrians with the first regiment. On abandoning the Caffaro line, which they had reoccupied after the Lodrone encounter—in consequence of which the Garibaldians had to fall back because of the concentration following the battle of Custozza—the Austrians have retired to the Lardara fortress, be-

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tween the Stabolfes and Tenara mountains, covering the route to Tione and Trento, in the Italian Tyrol. The third regiment of volunteers suffered most, as two of their companies had to bear the brunt of the terrible Austrian fire kept up from formidable positions. Another fight was taking place almost at the same time in the Val Camonico, i.e., north of the Caffaro, and of Rocca d'Anfo, Garibaldi's *point d'appui*. This encounter was sustained in the same proportions, the Italians losing one of their bravest and best officers in the person of Major Castellini, a Milanese, commander of the second battalion of Lombardian *bersaglieri*. Although these and Major Caldesi's battalion had to fall back from Vezza, a strong position was taken near Edalo, while in the rear a regiment kept Breno safe.

Although still at headquarters only two days ago, Baron Ricasoli has been suddenly summoned by telegram from Florence, and, as I hear, has just arrived. This is undoubtedly brought about by the new complications, especially as, at a council of ministers presided over by the baron, a vote, the nature of which is at yet unknown, was taken on the present state of affairs. As you know very well in England, Italy has great confidence in Ricasoli, whose conduct always far from obsequious to the French emperor, has pleased the nation. He is thought to be at this moment the right man in the right place, and with the great acquaintance he possesses of Italy and the Italians, and with the co-operation of such an honest man as General Lamarmora, Italy may be pronounced safe, both against friends and enemies.

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From what I saw this morning, coming back from the front, I presume that something, and that something new perhaps, will be attempted to-morrow. So far, the proposed armistice has had no effect upon the dispositions at general headquarters, and did not stay the cannon's voice. In the middle of rumours, of hopes and fears, Italy's wish to push on with the war has as yet been adhered to by her trusted leaders.

Headquarters of the First Army Corps,
Piadena, July 8, 1866.

As I begin writing you, no doubt can be entertained that some movement is not only in contemplation at headquarters, but is actually provided to take place to-day, and that it will probably prove to be against the Austrian positions at Borgoforte, on the left bank of the Po. Up to this time the *tête-de-pont* on the right side of the river had only been attacked by General the Duke of Mignano's guns. It would now, on the contrary, be a matter of cutting the communications between Borgoforte and Mantua, by occupying the lower part of the country around the latter fortress, advancing upon the Valli Veronesi, and getting round the quadrilateral into Venetia. While, then, waiting for further news to tell us whether this plan has been carried into execution, and whether it will be pursued, mindless of the existence of Mantua and Borgoforte on its flanks, one great fact is already ascertained, that the armistice proposed by the Emperor Napoleon has not been accepted, and that the war is to be continued. The Austrians may shut themselves up in their strongholds, or may even be so obliging as to leave the king

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the uncontested possession of them by retreating in the same line as their opponents advance; the pursuit, if not the struggle, the war, if not the battle, will be carried on by the Italians. At Torre Malamberti, where the general headquarters are, no end of general officers were to be seen yesterday hurrying in all directions. I met the king, Generals Brignone, Gavone, Valfré, and Menabrea within a few minutes of one another, and Prince Amadeus, who has entirely recovered from his wound, had been telegraphed for, and will arrive in Cremona to-day. No precise information is to be obtained respecting the intentions of the Austrians, but it is to be hoped for the Italian army, and for the credit of its generals, that more will be known about them now than was known on the eve of the famous 24th of June, and on its very morning. The heroism of the Italians on that memorable day surpasses any possible idea that can be formed, as it did also surpass all expectations of the country. Let me relate you a few out of many heroic facts which only come to light when an occasion is had of speaking with those who have been eye-witnesses of them, as they are no object of magnified regimental orders or, as yet, of well-deserved honours. Italian soldiers seem to think that the army only did its duty, and that, wherever Italians may fight, they will always show equal valour and firmness. Captain Biraghi, of Milan, belonging to the general staff, having in the midst of the battle received an order from General Lamarina for General Durando, was proceeding with all possible speed towards the first army corps, which was slowly retreating before the superior forces of the enemy and before the greatly superior number of his

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guns, when, while under a perfect shower of grape and canister, he was all of a sudden confronted by an Austrian officer of cavalry who had been lying in wait for the Italian orderly. The Austrian fires his revolver at Biraghi, and wounds him in the arm. Nothing daunted, Biraghi assails him and makes him turn tail; then, following in pursuit, unsaddles him, but has his own horse shot down under him. Biraghi disentangles himself, kills his antagonist, and jumps upon the latter's horse. This, however, is thrown down also in a moment by a cannon-ball, so that the gallant captain has to go back on foot, bleeding, and almost unable to walk. Talking of heroism, of inimitable endurance, and strength of soul, what do you think of a man who has his arm entirely carried away by a grenade, and yet keeps on his horse, firm as a rock, and still directs his battery, until hemorrhage—and hemorrhage *alone*—strikes him down at last, *dead*! Such was the case with a Neapolitan—Major Abate, of the artillery—and his name is worth the glory of a whole army, of a whole war; and may only find a fit companion in that of an officer of the eighteenth battalion of *bersaglieri*, who, dashing at an Austrian flag-bearer, wrenches the standard out of his hands with his left one, has it clean cut away by an Austrian officer standing near, and immediately grapples it with his right, until his own soldiers carry him away with his trophy! Does not this sound like Greek history repeated—does it not look as if the brave men of old had been born again, and the old facts renewed to tell of Italian heroism? Another *bersagliere*—a Tuscan, by name Orlandi Matteo, belonging to that heroic fifth battalion which fought against entire brigades,

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regiments, and battalions, losing 11 out of its 16 officers, and about 300 out of its 600 men—Orlandi, was wounded already, when, perceiving an Austrian flag, he makes a great effort, dashes at the officer, kills him, takes the flag, and, almost dying, gives it over to his lieutenant. He is now in a ward of the San Domenico Hospital in Brescia, and all who have learnt of his bravery will earnestly hope that he may survive to be pointed out as one of the many who covered themselves with fame on that day. If it is sad to read of death encountered in the field by so many a patriotic and brave soldier, it is sadder still to learn that not a few of them were barbarously killed by the enemy, and killed, too, when they were harmless, for they lay wounded on the ground. The Sicilian colonel, Stalella, a son-in-law of Senator Castagnetto, and a courageous man amongst the most courageous of men, was struck in the leg by a bullet, and thrown down from his horse while exciting his men to repulse the Austrians, which in great masses were pressing on his thinned column. Although retreating, the regiment sent some of his men to take him away, but as soon as he had been put on a stretcher [he] had to be put down, as ten or twelve uhlans were galloping down, obliging the men to hide themselves in a bush. When the uhlans got near the colonel, and when they had seen him lying down in agony, they all planted their lances in his body! Is not this wanton cruelty—cruelty even unheard of—cruelty that no savage possesses? Still these are facts, and no one will ever dare to deny them from Verona and Vienna, for they are known as much as it was known and seen that the uhlans and many of the

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Austrian soldiers were drunk when they began fighting, and that alighting from the trains they were provided with their rations and with rum, and that they fought without their haversacks. This is the truth, and nothing beyond it has to the honour of the Italians been asserted, whether to the disgrace or credit of their enemies; so that while denying that they ill-treat Austrian prisoners, they are ready to state that theirs are well treated in Verona, without thinking of slandering and calumniating as the Vienna papers have done.

This morning Prince Amadeus arrived in Cremona, where a most spontaneous and hearty reception was given him by the population and the National Guard. He proceeded at once by the shortest way to the headquarters, so that his wish to be again at the front when something should be done has been accomplished. This brave young man, and his worthy brother, Prince Humbert, have won the applause of all Italy, which is justly proud of counting her king and her princes amongst the foremost in the field.

I have just learned from a most reliable source that the Austrians have mined the bridge of Borghetto on the Mincio, so that, should it be blown up, the only two, those of Goito and Borghetto, would be destroyed, and the Italians obliged to make provisional ones instead. I also hear that the Venetian towns are without any garrison, and that most probably all the forces are massed on two lines, one from Peschiera to Custozza and the other behind the Adige.

You will probably know by this time that the garrison of Vienna had on the 3rd been directed to Prague. The news we receive from Prussia is on the

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whole encouraging, inasmuch as the greatly feared armistice has been repulsed by King William. Some people here think that France will not be too hard upon Italy for keeping her word with her ally, and that the brunt of French anger or disapproval will have to be borne by Prussia. This is the least she can expect, as you know!

It is probable that by to-morrow I shall be able to write you more about the Italo-Austrian war of 1866.

Gonzaga, July 9, 1866.

I write you from a villa, only a mile distant from Gonzaga, belonging to the family of the Counts Arrivabene of Mantua. The owners have never re-entered it since 1848, and it is only the fortune of war which has brought them to see their beautiful seat of the Aldegatta, never, it is to be hoped for them, to be abandoned again. It is, as you see, 'Mutatum ab illo.' Onward have gone, then, the exiled patriots! onward will go the nation that owns them! The wish of every one who is compelled to remain behind is—that the army, that the volunteers, that the fleet, should all co-operate, and that they should, one and all, land on Venetian ground, to seek for a great battle, to give the army back the fame it deserves, and to the country the honour it possesses. The king is called upon to maintain the word nobly given to avenge Novara, and with it the new Austrian insulting proposal. All, it is said, is ready. The army has been said to be numerous; if to be numerous and brave, means to deserve victory, let the Italian generals prove what Italian soldiers are worthy of. If they will fight, the country will support

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them with the boldest of resolutions—the country will accept a discussion whenever the Government, having dispersed all fears, will proclaim that the war is to be continued till victory is inscribed on Italy's shield.

As I am not far from Borgoforte, I am able to learn more than the mere cannon's voice can tell me, and so will give you some details of the action against the *tête-de-pont*, which began, as I told you in one of my former letters, on the 4th. In Borgoforte there were about 1500 Austrians, and, on the night from the 5th to the 6th, they kept up from their four fortified works a sufficiently well-sustained fire, the object of which was to prevent the enemy from posting his guns. This fire, however, did not cause any damage, and the Italians were able to plant their batteries. Early on the 6th, the firing began all along the line, the Italian 16-pounders having been the first to open fire. The Italian right was commanded by Colonel Mattei, the left by Colonel Bangoni, who did excellent work, while the other wing was not so successful. The heaviest guns had not yet arrived owing to one of those incidents always sure to happen when least expected, so that the 40-pounders could not be brought to bear against the forts until later in the day. The damage done to the works was not great for the moment, but still the advantage had been gained of feeling the strength of the enemy's positions and finding the right way to attack them. The artillerymen worked with great vigour, and were only obliged to desist by an unexpected order which arrived about two p.m. from General Cialdini. The attack was, however, resumed on the following day, and the condition of the Monteggiana and Rochetta forts may be pronounced

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precarious. As a sign of the times, and more especially of the just impatience which prevails in Italy about the general direction of the army movements, it may not be without importance to notice that the Italian press has begun to cry out against the darkness in which everything is enveloped, while the time already passed since the 24th June tells plainly of inaction. It is remarked that the bitter gift made by Austria of the Venetian provinces, and the suspicious offer of mediation by France, ought to have found Italy in greatly different condition, both as regards her political and military position. Italy is, on the contrary, in exactly the same state as when the Archduke Albert telegraphed to Vienna that a great success had been obtained over the Italian army. These are facts, and, however strong and worthy of respect may be the reasons, there is no doubt that an extraordinary delay in the resumption of hostilities has occurred, and that at the present moment operations projected are perfectly mysterious. Something is let out from time to time which only serves to make the subsequent absence of news more and more puzzling. For the present the first official relation of the unhappy fight of the 24th June is published, and is accordingly anxiously scanned and closely studied. It is a matter of general remark that no great military knowledge is required to perceive that too great a reliance was placed upon supposed facts, and that the indulgence of speculations and ideas caused the waste of so much precious blood. The prudence characterising the subsequent moves of the Austrians may have been caused by the effects of their opponents' arrangements, but the Italian commanders ought to have avoided

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the responsibility of giving the enemy the option to move.

It is clear that to mend things the utterance of generous and patriotic cries is not sufficient, and that it must be shown that the vigour of the body is not at all surpassed by the vigour of the mind. It is also clear that many lives might have been spared if there had been greater proofs of intelligence on the part of those who directed the movement.

The situation is still very serious. Such an armistice as General von Gablenz could humiliate himself enough to ask from the Prussians has been refused, but another which the Emperor of the French has advised them to accept might ultimately become a fact. For Italy, the purely Venetian question could then also be settled, while the Italian, the national question, the question of right and honour which the army prizes so much, would still remain to be solved.

Gonzaga, July 12, 1866.

Travelling is generally said to be troublesome, but travelling with and through brigades, divisions, and army corps, I can certify to be more so than is usually agreeable. It is not that Italian officers or Italian soldiers are in any way disposed to throw obstacles in your way; but they, unhappily for you, have with them the inevitable cars with the inevitable carmen, both of which are enough to make your blood freeze, though the barometer stands very high. What with their indolence, what with their number and the dust they made, I really thought they would drive me mad before I should reach Casalmaggiore on my way

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from Torre Malamberti. I started from the former place at three a.m., with beautiful weather, which, true to tradition, accompanied me all through my journey. Passing through San Giovanni in Croce, to which the headquarters of General Pianell had been transferred, I turned to the right in the direction of the Po, and began to have an idea of the wearisome sort of journey which I would have to make up to Casalmaggiore. On both sides of the way some regiments belonging to the rear division were still camped, and as I passed it was most interesting to see how busy they were cooking their 'rancio,' polishing their arms, and making the best of their time. The officers stood leisurely about gazing and staring at me, supposing, as I thought, that I was travelling with some part in the destiny of their country. Here and there some soldiers who had just left the hospitals of Brescia and Milan made their way to their corps and shook hands with their comrades, from whom only illness or the fortune of war had made them part. They seemed glad to see their old tent, their old drum, their old colour-sergeant, and also the flag they had carried to the battle and had not at any price allowed to be taken. I may state here, *en passant*, that as many as six flags were taken from the enemy in the first part of the day of Custozza, and were subsequently abandoned in the retreat, while of the Italians only one was lost to a regiment for a few minutes, when it was quickly retaken. This fact ought to be sufficient by itself to establish the bravery with which the soldiers fought on the 24th, and the bravery with which they will fight if, as they ardently wish, a new occasion is given to them.

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As long as I had only met troops, either marching or camping on the road, all went well, but I soon found myself mixed with an interminable line of cars and the like, forming the military and the civil train of the moving army. Then it was that it needed as much patience to keep from jumping out of one's carriage and from chastising the *carrettieri*, as they would persist in not making room for one, and being as dumb to one's entreaties as a stone. When you had finished with one you had to deal with another, and you find them all as obstinate and as egotistical as they are from one end of the world to the other, whether it be on the Casalmaggiore road or in High Holborn. From time to time things seemed to proceed all right, and you thought yourself free from further trouble, but you soon found out your mistake, as an enormous ammunition car went smack into your path, as one wheel got entangled with another, and as imperturbable Signor Carrettiere evidently took delight at a fresh opportunity for stoppage, inaction, indolence, and sleep. I soon came to the conclusion that Italy would not be free when the Austrians had been driven away, for that another and a more formidable foe—an enemy to society and comfort, to men and horses, to mankind in general—would have still to be beaten, expelled, annihilated, in the shape of the *carrettiere*. If you employ him, he robs you fifty times over; if you want him to drive quickly, he is sure to keep the animal from going at all; if, worse than all, you never think of him, or have just been plundered by him, he will not move an inch to oblige you. Surely the cholera is not the only pestilence a country may be visited with; and, should

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Cialdini ever go to Vienna, he might revenge Novara and the Spielberg by taking with him the *carrettieri* of the whole army.

At last Casalmaggiore hove in sight, and, when good fortune and the carmen permitted, I reached it. It was time! No iron-plated Jacob could ever have resisted another two miles' journey in such company. At Casalmaggiore I branched off. There were, happily, two roads, and not the slightest reason or smallest argument were needed to make me choose *that* which my *cauchemar* had not chosen. They were passing the river at Casalmaggiore. I went, of course, for the same purpose, somewhere else. Any place was good enough—so I thought, at least, then. New adventures, new miseries awaited me—some *carrettiere*, or other, guessing that I was no friend of his, nor of the whole set of them, had thrown the *jattatura* on me.

I alighted at the Colombina, after four hours' ride, to give the horses time to rest a little. The Albergo della Colombina was a great disappointment, for there was nothing there that could be eaten. I decided upon waiting most patiently, but most unlike a few cavalry officers, who, all covered with dust, and evidently as hungry and as thirsty as they could be, began to swear to their hearts' content. In an hour some eggs and some *salame*, a kind of sausage, were brought up, and quickly disposed of. A young lieutenant of the thirtieth infantry regiment of the Pisa brigade took his place opposite, and we were soon engaged in conversation. He had been in the midst and worst part of the battle of Custozza, and had escaped being taken prisoner by what seemed a miracle. He told me how, when his regiment advanced on the Monte

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Croce position, which he practically described to me as having the form of an English pudding, they were fired upon by batteries both on their flanks and front. The lieutenant added, however, rather contemptuously, that they did not even bow before them, as the custom appears to be—that is, to lie down, as the Austrians were firing very badly. The cross-fire got, however, so tremendous that an order had to be given to keep down by the road to avoid being annihilated. The assault was given, the whole range of positions was taken, and kept too for hours, until the infallible rule of three to one, backed by batteries, grape, and canister, compelled them to retreat, which they did slowly and in order. It was then that their brigade commander, Major-General Rey de Villarey, who, though a native of Mentone, had preferred remaining with his king from going over to the French after the cession, turning to his son, who was also his aide-de-camp, said in his dialect, 'Now, my son, we must die both of us,' and with a touch of the spurs was soon in front of the line and on the hill, where three bullets struck him almost at once dead. The horse of his son falling while following, his life was spared. My lieutenant at this moment was so overcome with hunger and fatigue that he fell down, and was thought to be dead. He was not so, however, and had enough life to hear, after the fight was over, the Austrian Jägers pass by, and again retire to their original positions, where their infantry was lying down, not dreaming for one moment of pursuing the Italians. Four of his soldiers—all Neapolitans—he heard coming in search of him, while the bullets still hissed all round; and, as soon as he

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made a sign to them, they approached, and took him on their shoulders back to where was what remained of the regiment. It is highly creditable to Italian unity to hear an old Piedmontese officer praise the levies of the new provinces, and the lieutenant took delight in relating that another Neapolitan was in the fight standing by him, and firing as fast as he could, when a shell having burst near him, he disdainfully gave it a look, and did not even seek to save himself from the *jattatura*.

The gallant lieutenant had unfortunately to leave at last, and I was deprived of many an interesting tale and of a brave man's company. I started, therefore, for Viadana, where I purposed passing the Po, the left bank of which the road was now following parallel with the stream. At Viadana, however, I found no bridge, as the military had demolished what existed only the day before, and so had to look out for information. As I was going about under the porticoes which one meets in almost all the villages in this neighbourhood, I was struck by the sight of an ancient and beautiful piece of art—for so it was—a Venetian mirror of Murano. It hung on the wall inside the village draper's shop, and was readily shown me by the owner, who did not conceal the pride he had in possessing it. It was one of those mirrors one rarely meets with now, which were once so abundant in the old princes' castles and palaces. It looked so deep and true, and the gilt frame was so light, and of such a purity and elegance, that it needed all my resolution to keep from buying it, though a bargain would not have been effected very easily. The mirror, however, had to be abandoned, as Dosalo, the nearest

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point for crossing the Po, was still seven miles distant. By this time the sun was out in all its force, and the heat was by no means agreeable. Then there was dust, too, as if the *carrettieri* had been passing in hundreds, so that the heat was almost unbearable. At last the Dosalo ferry was reached, the road leading to it was entered, and the carriage was, I thought, to be at once embarked, when a drove of oxen were discovered to have the precedence; and so I had to wait. This under such a sun, on a shadeless beach, and with the prospect of having to stay there for two hours at least, was by no means pleasant. It took three-quarters of an hour to put the oxen in the boat, it took half an hour to get them on the other shore, and another hour to have the ferry boat back. The panorama from the beach was splendid, the Po appeared in all the mighty power of his waters, and as you looked with the glass at oxen and trees on the other shore, they appeared to be clothed in all the colours of the rainbow, and as if belonging to another world. Several peasants were waiting for the boat near me, talking about the war and the Austrians, and swearing they would, if possible, annihilate some of the latter. I gave them the glass to look with, and I imagined that they had never seen one before, for they thought it highly wonderful to make out what the time was at the Luzzara Tower, three miles in a straight line on the other side. The revolver, too, was a subject of great admiration, and they kept turning, feeling, and staring at it, as if they could not make out which way the cartridges were put in. One of these peasants, however, was doing the grand with the others, and once on the subject of history

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related to all who would hear how he had been to St. Helena, which was right in the middle of Moscow, where it was so very cold that his nose had got to be as large as his head. The poor man was evidently mixing one night's tale with that of the next one, a tale probably heard from the old Sindaco, who is at the same time the schoolmaster, the notary, and the highest municipal authority in the place.

I started in the ferry boat with them at last. While crossing they got to speak of the priests, and were all agreed, to put it in the mildest way, in thinking extremely little of them, and only differed as to what punishment they should like them to suffer.

On the side where we landed lay heaps of ammunition-casks for the corps besieging Borgoforte. Others were conveyed upon cars by my friends the *carrettieri*, of whom it was decreed I should not be quit for some time to come. Entering Guastalla I found only a few artillery officers, evidently in charge of what we had seen carried along the route. Guastalla is a neat little town very proud of its statue of Duke Ferrante Gonzaga, and the Croce Rossa is a neat little inn, which may be proud of a smart young waiter, who actually discovered that, as I wanted to proceed to Luzzara, a few miles on, I had better stop till next morning. I did not take his advice, and was soon under the gate of Luzzara, a very neat little place, once one of the many possessions where the Gonzagas had a court, a palace, and a castle. The arms over the archway may still be seen, and would not be worth any notice but for a remarkable work of terra-cotta representing a

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crown of pines and pine leaves in a wonderful state of preservation. The whole is so artistically arranged and so natural, that one might believe it to be one of Luca della Robbia's works. Luzzara has also a great tower, which I had seen in the distance from Dosalo, and the only albergo in the place gives you an excellent Italian dinner. The wine might please one of the greatest admirers of sherry, and if you are not given feather beds, the beds are at least clean like the rooms themselves. Here, as it was getting too dark, I decided upon stopping, a decision which gave me occasion to see one of the finest sunsets I ever saw. As I looked from the albergo I could see a gradation of colours, from the purple red to the deepest of sea blue, rising like an immense tent from the dark green of the trees and the fields, here and there dotted with little white houses, with their red roofs, while in front the Luzzara Tower rose majestically in the twilight. As the hour got later the colours deepened, and the lower end of the immense curtain gradually disappeared, while the stars and the planets began shining high above. A peasant was singing in a field near by, and the bells of a church were chiming in the distance. Both seemed to harmonise wonderfully. It was a scene of great loveliness.

At four a.m. I was up, and soon after on the road to Reggiolo, and then to Gonzaga.* Here the vegetation gets to be more luxuriant, and every inch of ground contributes to the immense vastness of the whole. Nature is here in full perfection, and as even the telegraphic wire hangs leisurely down from tree to tree, instead of being stuck upon poles, you feel that the romantic aspect of the place is too beautiful to be

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encroached upon. All is peace, beauty, and happiness, all reveals to you that you are in Italy.

In Gonzaga, which only a few days ago belonged to the Austrians, the Italian tricolour is out of every window. As the former masters retired the new advanced, and when a detachment of Monferrato lancers entered the old castle town the joy of the inhabitants seemed to be almost bordering on delirium. The lancers soon left, however. The flag only remains.

July 11.

Cialdini began passing the Po on the 8th, and crossed at three points, i.e., Carbonara, Carbonarola, and Follonica. Beginning at three o'clock in the morning, he had finished crossing upon the two first pontoon bridges towards midnight on the 9th. The bridge thrown up at Follonica was still intact up to seven in the morning on the 10th, but the troops and the military and the civil train that remained followed the Po without crossing to Stellata, in the supposed direction of Ponte Lagoscura.

Yesterday guns were heard here at seven o'clock in the morning, and up to eleven o'clock, in the direction of Legnano, towards, I think, the Adige. The firing was lively, and of such a nature as to make one surmise that battle had been given. Perhaps the Austrians have awaited Cialdini under Legnano, or they have disputed the crossing of the Adige. Rovigo was abandoned by the Austrians in the night of the 9th and 10th. They have blown up the Rovigo and Boara fortresses, have destroyed the *tête-de-pont* on the Adige, and burnt all bridges. They may now seek to keep by the left side of this river up to Legnano, so as

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to get under the protection of the quadrilateral, in which case, if Cialdini can cross the river in time, the shock would be almost inevitable, and would be a reason for yesterday's firing. They may also go by rail to Padua, when they would have Cialdini between them and the quadrilateral. In any case, if this general is quick, or if they are not too quick for him, according to possible instructions, a collision is difficult to be avoided.

Baron Ricasoli has left Florence for the camp, and all sorts of rumours are afloat as to the present state of negotiations as they appear unmistakably to exist. The opinions are, I think, divided in the high councils of the Crown, and the country is still anxious to know the result of this state of affairs. A splendid victory by Cialdini might at this moment solve many a difficulty. As it is, the war is prosecuted everywhere except by sea, for Garibaldi's forces are slowly advancing in the Italian Tyrol, while the Austrians wait for them behind the walls of Landaro and Ampola. The Garibaldians' advanced posts were, by the latest news, near Darso.

The news from Prussia is still contradictory; while the Italian press is unanimous in asking with the country that Cialdini should advance, meet the enemy, fight him, and rout him if possible. Italy's wishes are entirely with him.

Noale, near Treviso, July 17, 1866.

From Lusia I followed General Medici's division to Motta, where I left it, not without regret, however, as better companions could not easily be found, so kind were the officers and jovial the men. They are now

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encamped around Padua, and will to-morrow march on Treviso, where the Italian Light Horse have already arrived, if I judge so from their having left Noale on the 15th. From the right I hear that the advanced posts have proceeded as far as Mira on the Brenta, twenty kilometres from Venice itself, and that the first army corps is to concentrate opposite Chioggia. This corps has marched from Ferrara straight on to Rovigo, which the forward movement of the fourth, or Cialdini's *corps d'armée*, had left empty of soldiers. General Pianell has still charge of it, and Major-General Cadalini, formerly at the head of the Siena brigade, replaces him in the command of his former division. General Pianell has under him the gallant Prince Amadeus, who has entirely recovered from his chest wound, and of whom the brigade of Lombardian grenadiers is as proud as ever. They could not wish for a more skilled commander, a better superior officer, and a more valiant soldier. Thus the troops who fought on the 24th June are kept in the second line, while the still fresh divisions under Cialdini march first, as fast as they can. This, however, is of no avail. The Italian outposts on the Piave have not yet crossed it, for the reason that they must keep distances with their regiments, but will do so as soon as these get nearer to the river. If it was not that this is always done in regular warfare, they could beat the country beyond the Piave for a good many miles without even seeing the shadow of an Austrian. To the simple private, who does not know of diplomatic imbroglios and of political considerations, this sudden retreat means an almost as sudden retracing of steps, because he remembers that this manœuvre preceded both the

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attacks on Solferino and on Custozza by the Austrians. To the officer, however, it means nothing else than a fixed desire not to face the Italian army any more, and so it is to him a source of disappointment and despondency. He cannot bear to think that another battle is improbable, and may be excused if he is not in the best of humour when on this subject. This is the case not only with the officers but with the volunteers, who have left their homes and the comfort of their domestic life, not to be paraded at reviews, but to be sent against the enemy. There are hundreds of these in the regular army—in the cavalry especially, and the Aosta Lancers and the regiment of Guides are half composed of them. If you listen to them, there ought not to be the slightest doubt or hesitation as to crossing the Isongo and marching upon Vienna. May Heaven see their wishes accomplished, for, unless crushed by sheer force, Italy is quite decided to carry war into the enemy's country.

The decisions of the French government are looked for here with great anxiety, and not a few men are found who predict them to be unfavourable to Italy. Still, it is hard for every one to believe that the French emperor will carry things to extremities, and increase the many difficulties Europe has already to contend with.

To-day there was a rumour at the mess table that the Austrians had abandoned Legnano, one of the four fortresses of the quadrilateral. I do not put much faith in it at present, but it is not improbable, as we may expect many strange things from the Vienna government. It would have been much better for them, since Archduke Albert spoke in eulogistic terms

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of the king, of his sons, and of his soldiers, while relating the action of the 24th, to have treated with Italy direct, thus securing peace, and perhaps friendship, from her. But the men who have ruled so despotically for years over Italian subjects cannot reconcile themselves to the idea that Italy has at last risen to be a nation, and they even take slyly an opportunity to throw new insult into her face. You can easily see that the old spirit is still struggling for empire; that the old contempt is still trying to make light of Italians; and that the old Metternich ideas are still fondly clung to. Does not this deserve another lesson? Does not this need another Sadowa to quiet down for ever? Yes; and it devolves upon Italy to do it. If so, let only Cialdini's army alone, and the day may be nigh at hand when the king may tell the country that the task has been accomplished.

A talk on the present state of political affairs, and on the peculiar position of Italy, is the only subject worth notice in a letter from the camp. Everything else is at a standstill, and the movements of the fine army Cialdini now disposes of, about 150,000 men, are no longer full of interest. They may, perhaps, have some as regards an attack on Venice, because Austrian soldiers are still garrisoning it, and will be obliged to fight if they are assailed. It is hoped, if such is the case, that the beautiful queen of the Adriatic will be spared a scene of devastation, and that no new Haynau will be found to renew the deeds of Brescia and Vicenza.

The king has not yet arrived, and it seems probable he will not come for some time, until indeed the day comes for Italian troops to make their triumphal entry into the city of the Doges.

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The heat continues intense, and this explains the slowness in advancing. As yet no sickness has appeared, and it must be hoped that the troops will be healthy, as sickness tries the *morale* much more than half-a-dozen Custozzas.

P.S.—I had finished writing when an officer came rushing into the inn where I am staying and told me that he had just heard that an Italian patrol had met an Austrian one on the road out of the village, and routed it. This may or may not be true, but it was most curious to see how delighted every one was at the idea that they had found 'them' at last. They did not care much about the result of the engagement, which, as I said, was reported to have been favourable. All that they cared about was that they were close to the enemy. One cannot despair of an army which is animated with such spirits. You would think, from the joy which brightens the face of the soldiers you meet now about, that a victory had been announced for the Italian arms.

Dolo, near Venice, July 20, 1866.

I returned from Noale to Padua last evening, and late in the night I received the intimation at my quarters that cannon was heard in the direction of Venice. It was then black as in Dante's hell, and raining and blowing with violence—one of those Italian storms which seem to awake all the earthly and heavenly elements of creation. There was no choice for it but to take to the saddle, and try to make for the front. No one who has not tried it can fancy what work it is to find one's way along a road on which a whole *corps d'armée* is marching with an enormous *matériel*

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of war in a pitch dark night. This, however, is what your special correspondent was obliged to do. Fortunately enough, I had scarcely proceeded as far as Ponte di Brenta when I fell in with an officer of Cialdini's staff, who was bound to the same destination, namely, Dolo. As we proceeded along the road under a continuous shower of rain, our eyes now and then dazzled by the bright serpent-like flashes of the lightning, we fell in with some battalion or squadron, which advanced carefully, as it was impossible for them as well as for us to discriminate between the road and the ditches which flank it, for all the landmarks, so familiar to our guides in the daytime, were in one dead level of blackness. So it was that my companion and myself, after stumbling into ditches and out of them, after knocking our horses' heads against an ammunition car, or a party of soldiers sheltered under some big tree, found ourselves, after three hours' ride, in this village of Dolo. By this time the storm had greatly abated in its violence, and the thunder was but faintly heard now and then at such a distance as to enable us distinctly to hear the roar of the guns. Our horses could scarcely get through the sticky black mud, into which the white suffocating dust of the previous days had been turned by one night's rain. We, however, made our way to the parsonage of the village, for we had already made up our minds to ascend the steeple of the church to get a view of the surrounding country and a better hearing of the guns if possible. After a few words exchanged with the sexton—a staunch Italian, as he told us he was—we went up the ladder of the church spire. Once on the wooden

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platform, we could hear more distinctly the boom of the guns, which sounded like the broadsides of a big vessel. Were they the guns of Persano's long inactive fleet attacking some of Brondolo's or Chioggia's advanced forts? Were the guns those of some Austrian man-of-war which had engaged an Italian ironclad; or were they the Affondatore, which left the Thames only a month ago, pitching into Trieste? To tell the truth, although we patiently waited two long hours on Dolo church spire, when both I and my companion descended we were not in a position to solve either of these problems. We, however, thought then, and still think, they were the guns of the Italian fleet which had attacked an Austrian fort.

Civita Vecchia, July 22, 1866.

Since the departure from this port of the old hospital ship Grégéois about a year ago, no French ship of war had been stationed at Civita Vecchia; but on Wednesday morning the steam-sloop Catinat, 180 men, cast anchor in the harbour, and the commandant immediately on disembarking took the train for Rome and placed himself in communication with the French ambassador. I am not aware whether the Pontifical government had applied for this vessel, or whether the sending it was a spontaneous attention on the part of the French emperor, but, at any rate, its arrival has proved a source of pleasure to His Holiness, as there is no knowing what may happen in troublous times like the present, and it is always good to have a retreat insured.

Yesterday it was notified in this port, as well as

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at Naples, that arrivals from Marseilles would be, until further notice, subjected to a quarantine of fifteen days in consequence of cholera having made its appearance at the latter place. A sailing vessel which arrived from Marseilles in the course of the day had to disembark the merchandise it brought for Civita Vecchia into barges off the lazaretto, where the yellow flag was hoisted over them. This vessel left Marseilles five days before the announcement of the quarantine, while the Prince Napoleon of Valery's Company, passenger and merchandise steamer, which left Marseilles only one day before its announcement, was admitted this morning to free pratique. Few travellers will come here by sea now.

Marseilles, July 24.

Accustomed as we have been of late in Italy to almost hourly bulletins of the progress of hostilities, it is a trying condition to be suddenly debarred of all intelligence by finding oneself on board a steamer for thirty-six hours without touching at any port, as was my case in coming here from Civita Vecchia on board the Prince Napoleon. But, although telegrams were wanting, discussions on the course of events were rife on board among the passengers who had embarked at Naples and Civita Vecchia, comprising a strong batch of French and Belgian priests returning from a pilgrimage to Rome, well supplied with rosaries and chaplets blessed by the Pope and *facsimiles* of the chains of St. Peter. Not much sympathy for the Italian cause was shown by these gentlemen or the few French and German travellers who, with three or four Neopolitans, formed the

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quarter-deck society; and our Corsican captain took no pains to hide his contempt at the dilatory proceedings of the Italian fleet at Ancona. We know that the Prussian minister, M. d'Usedom, has been recently making strenuous remonstrances at Ferrara against the slowness with which the Italian naval and military forces were proceeding, while their allies, the Prussians, were already near the gates of Vienna; and the conversation of a Prussian gentleman on board our steamer, who was connected with that embassy, plainly indicated the disappointment felt at Berlin at the rather inefficacious nature of the diversion made in Venetia, and on the coast of Istria by the army and navy of Victor Emmanuel. He even attributed to his minister an expression not very flattering either to the future prospects of Italy as resulting from her alliance with Prussia, or to the fidelity of the latter in carrying out the terms of it. I do not know whether this gentleman intended his anecdote to be taken *cum grano salis*, but I certainly understood him to say that he had deplored to the minister the want of vigour and the absence of success accompanying the operations of the Italian allies of Prussia, when His Excellency replied: 'C'est bien vrai. Ils nous ont trompés; mais que voulez-vous y faire maintenant? Nous aurons le temps de les faire égorger après.'

It is difficult to suppose that there should exist a preconceived intention on the part of Prussia to repay the sacrifices hitherto made, although without a very brilliant accompaniment of success, by the Italian government in support of the alliance, by making her own separate terms with Austria and

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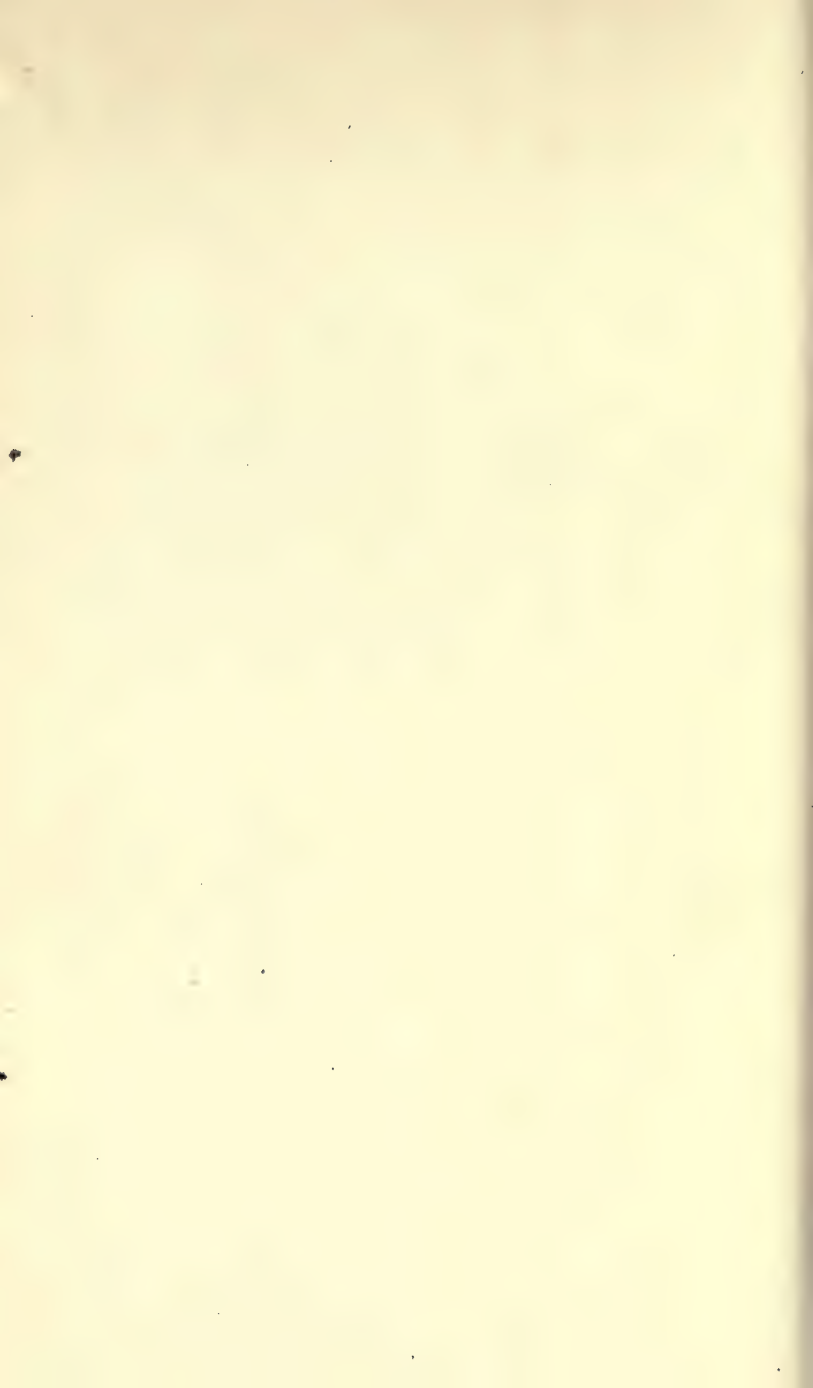
leaving Italy subsequently exposed to the vengeance of the latter, but such would certainly be the inference to be drawn from the conversation just quoted.

It was only on arriving in the port of Marseilles, however, that the full enmity of most of my travelling companions towards Italy and the Italians was manifested. A sailor, the first man who came on board before we disembarked, was immediately pounced upon for news, and he gave it as indeed nothing less than the destruction, more or less complete, of the Italian fleet by that of the Austrians. At this astounding intelligence the Prussian burst into a yell of indignation. 'Fools! blockheads! *misérables!* Beaten at sea by an inferior force! Is that the way they mean to reconquer Venice by dint of arms? If ever they do regain Venetia it will be through the blood of our Brandenburgers and Pomeranians, and not their own.' During this tirade a little old Belgian in black, with the chain of St. Peter at his buttonhole by way of watchguard, capered off to communicate the grateful news to a group of his ecclesiastical fellow-travellers, shrieking out in ecstasy: 'Rossés, Messieurs! Ces blagueurs d'Italiens ont été rossés par mer, comme ils avaient été rossés par terre.' Whereupon the reverend gentlemen congratulated each other with nods, and winks, and smiles, and sundry fervent squeezes of the hand. The same demonstrations would doubtless have been made by the Neapolitan passengers had they belonged to the Bourbonic faction, but they happened to be honest traders with cases of coral and lava for the Paris market, and therefore they merely stood silent and aghast at the fatal news, with their

SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY

eyes and mouths as wide open as possible. I had no sooner got to my hotel than I inquired for the latest Paris journal, when the 'France' was handed me, and I obtained confirmation in a certain degree of the disaster to the Italian fleet narrated by the sailor, although not quite in the same formidable proportions.

Before quitting the subject of my fellow-passengers on board the Prince Napoleon I must mention an anecdote related to me, respecting the state of brigandage, by a Russian or German gentleman, who told me he was established at Naples. He was complaining of the dangers he had occasionally encountered in crossing in a diligence from Naples to Foggia on business; and then, speaking of the audacity of brigands in general, he told me that last year he saw with his own eyes, in broad daylight, two brigands walking about the streets of Naples with messages from captured individuals to their relations, mentioning the sums which had been demanded for their ransoms. They were unarmed, and in the common peasants' dresses, and whenever they arrived at one of the houses to which they were addressed for this purpose, they stopped and opened a handkerchief which one of them carried in his hand, and took out an ear, examining whether the ticket on it corresponded with the address of the house or the name of the resident. There were six ears, all ticketed with the names of the original owners in the handkerchief, which were gradually dispensed to their families in Naples to stimulate prompt payment of the required ransoms. On my inquiring how it was that the police took no notice



OVER THE HILLS ¹

The old hound wags his shaggy tail,
And I know what he would say :
It 's over the hills we 'll bound, old hound,
Over the hills, and away.

There 's nought for us here save to count the
clock,
And hang the head all day :
But over the hills we 'll bound, old hound,
Over the hills and away.

Here among men we 're like the deer
That yonder is our prey :
So, over the hills we 'll bound, old hound,
Over the hills and away.

The hypocrite is master here,
But he 's the cock of clay :
So, over the hills we 'll bound, old hound,
Over the hills and away.

The women, they shall sigh and smile,
And madden whom they may :
It 's over the hills we 'll bound, old hound,
Over the hills and away.

¹ 'Once a Week,' August 20, 1859.

OVER THE HILLS

Let silly lads in couples run
To pleasure, a wicked fay :
'Tis ours on the heather to bound, old hound,
Over the hills and away.

The torrent glints under the rowan red,
And shakes the bracken spray :
What joy on the heather to bound, old hound,
Over the hills and away.

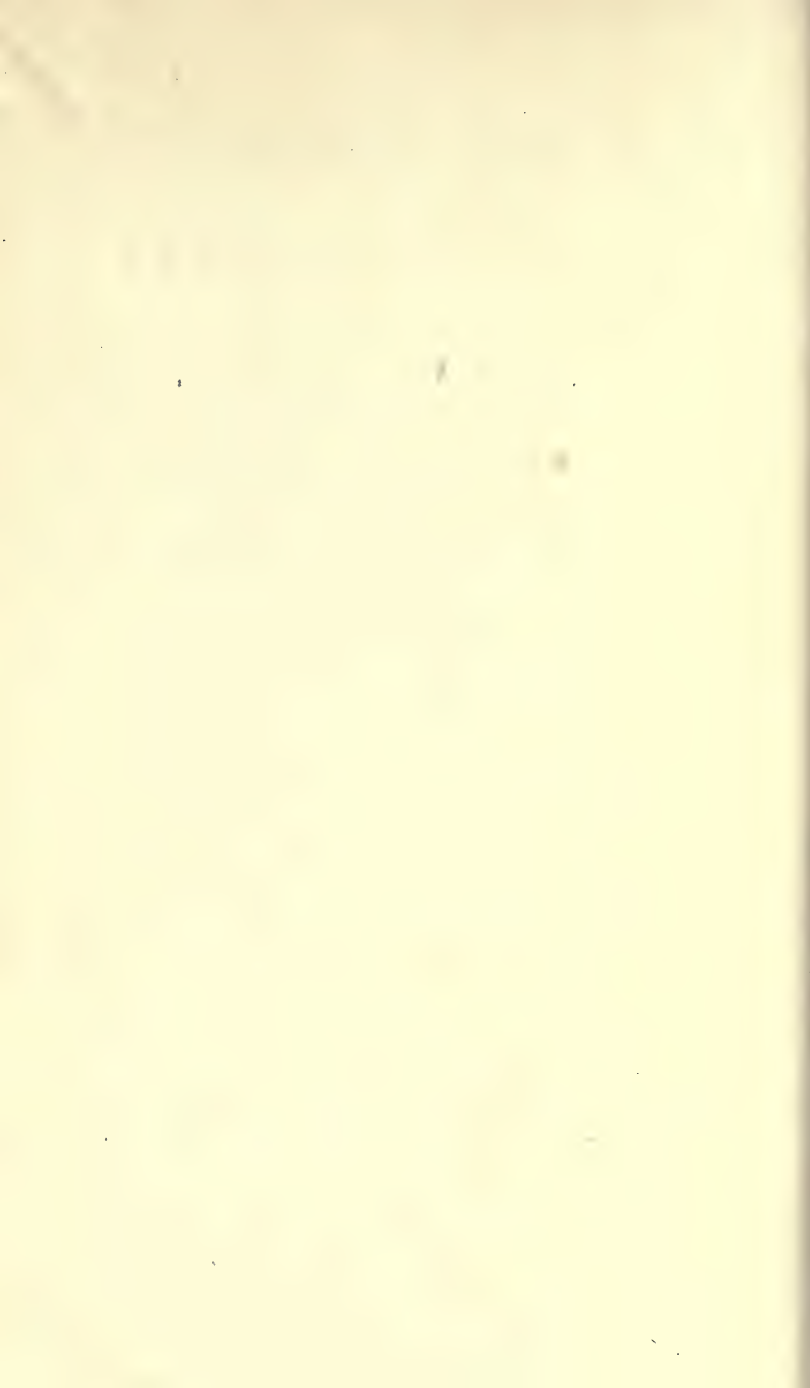
The sun bursts broad, and the heathery bed
Is purple, and orange, and gray :
Away, and away, we 'll bound, old hound,
Over the hills and away.

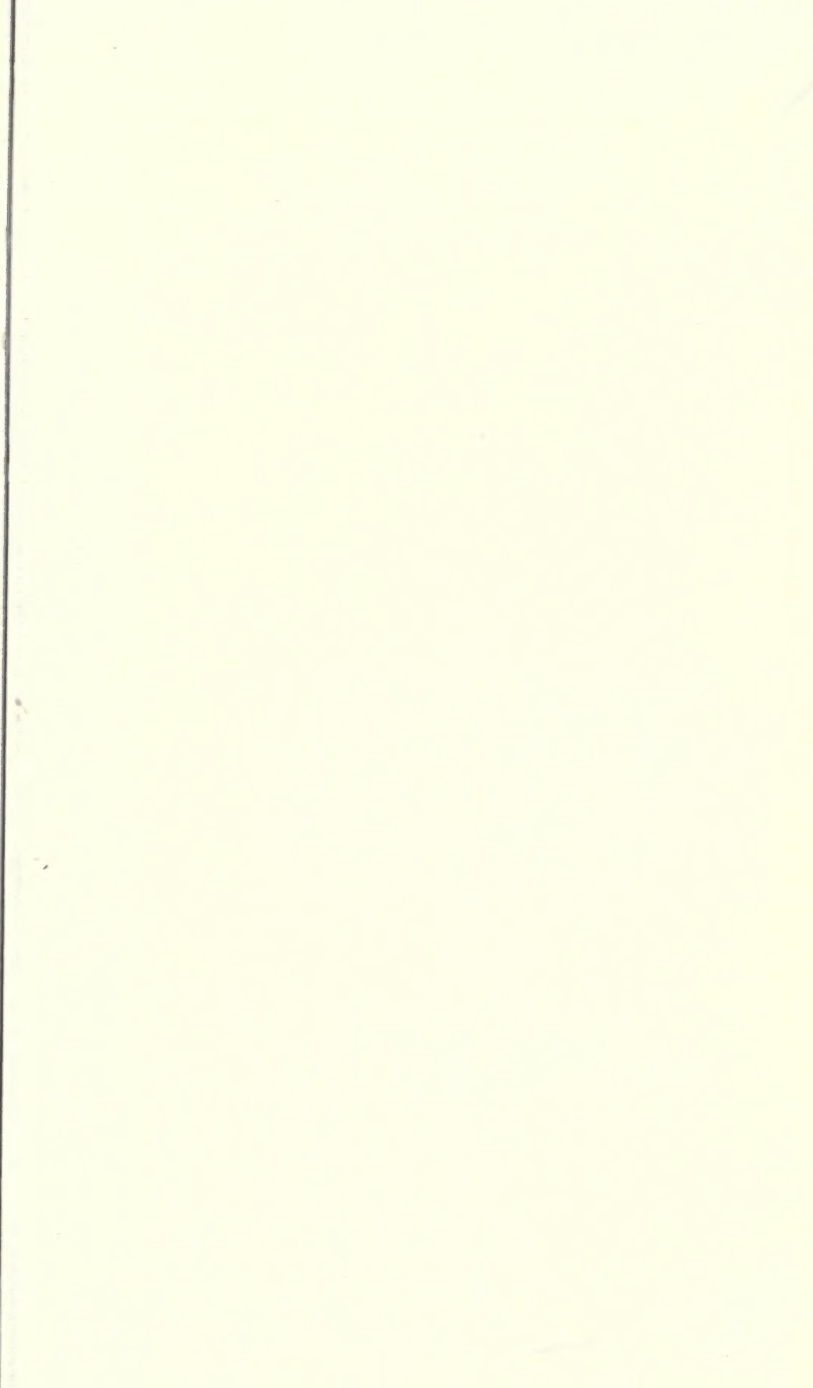
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